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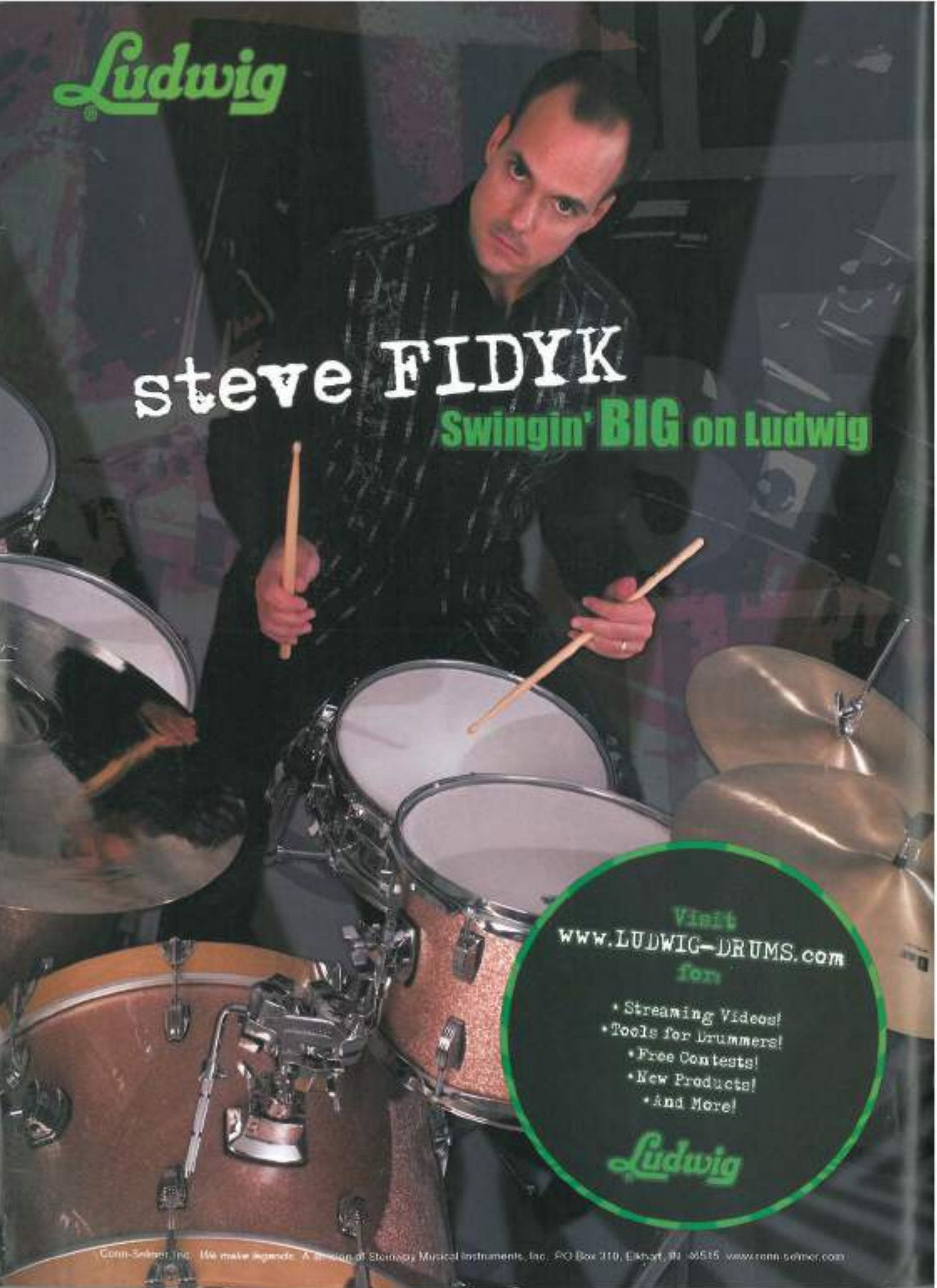
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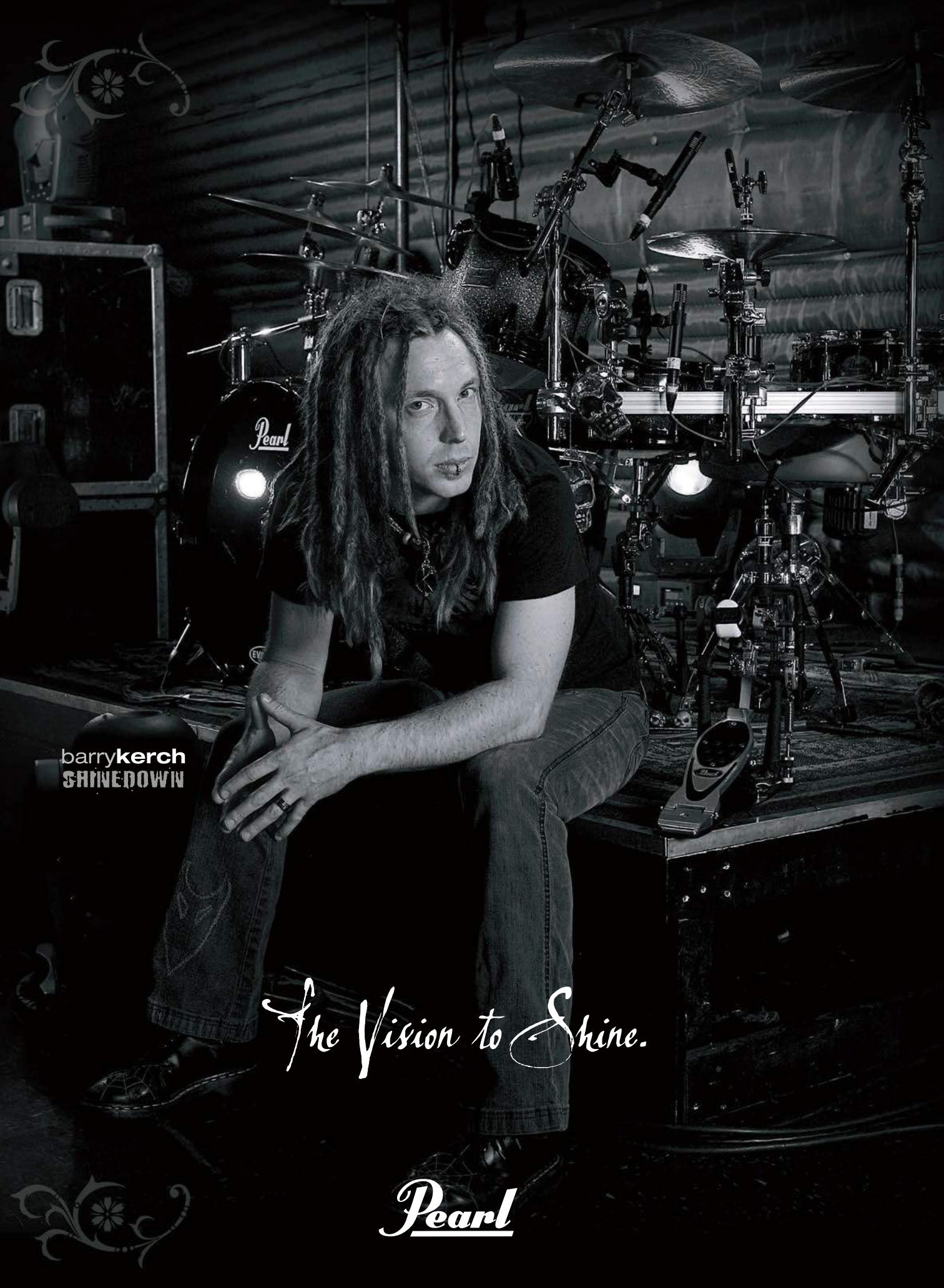
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A Hollowed-Out Log By Any Other Name...

A year or so ago in this column I was bitching about the overuse of digital manipulation in modern drum recording. Since that time I got a new computer that came with Garage Band software installed on it. Garage Band is a flexible and easy-to-use music recording program, and...well...if you can fall in love with a complex series of 0's and 1's, then you best believe I'm in love LUV!

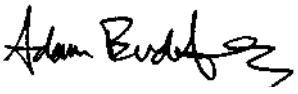
Now before you get all, "Adam is *such* a hypocrite," you might recall that my big complaint last time was about the trend of "cleaning up" drum performances to basically fudge pro-quality playing. But as with any other powerful electronic gear, employing Garage Band doesn't mean you have to abuse it. Sure, it'll help you get to where you want to go faster and cheaper than buying and learning how to manipulate a bunch of outboard gear. But it's not going to miraculously turn you into a brilliant musician. You still have to bring some talent to the table. You still have to know what's cool and what's crap.

Previously, my work in the digital realm mostly involved sampling bits of band improvs on a stand-alone Roland SP 303 unit, looping those samples, and stringing them together into song form. My favorite aspect of this approach is that sometimes the drum parts I loop contain "mistakes," perfect imperfections that I would then learn to repeat consistently on the drumkit so that I can play the songs live. I might never achieve the control of, say, Vinnie Colaiuta with this method, but my rhythmic imagination and abilities have expanded in ways that, pre-digital, I probably would never have imagined.

Though my trusty SP 303 still inspires all sorts of insane experimentation along these lines, Garage Band multiplies the possibilities to silly extremes. Of course, now I have to fight the temptation to over-fix stuff. But I just have to keep reminding myself that the most important part of all this musical messing-around remains the same as it was when Zorg first put stick to hollowed-out log: Only I can decide if the music rocks, or if it doesn't. No series of 0's and 1's is ever going to be able to answer that question for me.

***

Speaking of the digital realm, be sure to check out the spread on page 128 of this issue, where we introduce the new cross-platform version of the Modern Drummer Digital Archive. We know a lot of you out there have been champing at the bit for this, and we're thrilled to be able to let all you Mac users in on the awesome power of this research tool.



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Thompson And Glaspie

Fabulous cover story on Kim Thompson and Nikki Glaspie in your February 2007 issue! Thanks to *Modern Drummer* for putting talented female drummers front and center. That's truly modern thinking.

Susan J. Behrens

I doubt that Kim and Nikki would have been on your cover if they weren't on tour with a high-profile artist like Beyoncé. An all-girl touring band sounds more like a gimmick than a collection of truly talented players. Why buy into it?

Fred Devlin

Gavin Harrison

Your February feature on Gavin Harrison was long overdue. He's one of the most progressive and technically talented—yet totally *musical*—drummers playing today.

Diane Nitsche

As an author, he creates challenging books with original concepts. As a player, his work with Porcupine Tree is amazing. Drummers like that don't come along very often.

Sam Mendes

Hot Country

Alright! Finally some of the country guys get their moment in the spotlight. I've seen all of the great country stars perform, and I can tell you that Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, and The Dixie Chicks wouldn't be the successes they are without the great foundation provided by Sean Paddock, Dave McAfee, and Fred Eltringham [respectively]. Today's country music ain't Hank Williams anymore. It's high-energy show business, and only the best players can make the cut. Thanks for highlighting three of them.

Paul Wantaugh

Top 15 Drumming Intros

While I enjoyed reading the "Take It From The Top" article in the February issue, I was surprised that one classic drum intro didn't make the cut: The mix of drums and cowbell that leads into The Rolling Stones' "Honky Tonk Women." I can think of several more, but this one really stood out for me.

Paul Riley

The drum intro to 1973's "Rock Candy" by Denny Carmassi with Montrose should have been in the top 5! This tune was all over the radio for years in the '70s, and it influenced too many rock drummers to ignore it.

Lou Contino

Weekend Warriors

I enjoyed Chris Duignan's "Weekend Warrior" article in the February issue, about balancing work and family with one's passion for drumming. Understanding spouses know that their drummers are happiest when they're playing regularly. And while the extra income such playing can provide is nice, some of the greatest rewards have nothing to do with getting paid.

As a father, I know that my drumming has had a lasting impact on my kids. They see their dad pursuing his passions, so they've always enthusiastically pursued theirs as well. One of my children got actively involved in music, and that opened up quite a few additional opportunities for him. And thus the benefits get passed on!

Lee Warner

Tempus Tom Mount

In his February review of the Tempus Carbonfibre drumkit, T. Bruce Wittet praises the rail mount pictured on the kit—but mistakenly credits DW as the inventor and manufacturer of that mount. I am the designer of the patent-pending R Class rail mount. The part is being distributed through Kaman as a Gibraltar component. I'd appreciate your setting the record straight.

Ronn Dunnett
Dunnett Classic Drums

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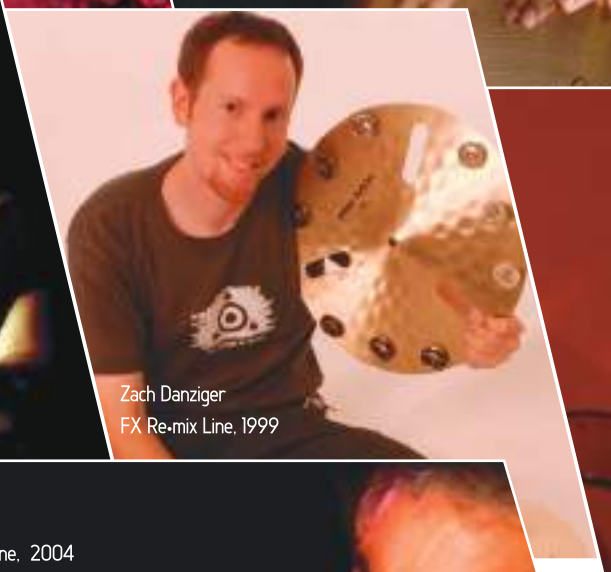
Dennis Chambers
Oriental Crash of Doom, 2000.
K Custom Fast Crashes, 2003

Akira Jimbo
K Custom Hybrid Line, 2006

Cindy Blackman
K Zildjian Dark Medium Ride, 2007

Mike Mangini
ZXT Trashformer, 2002



Zach Danziger
FX Re•mix Line, 1999

Tim Alexander
ZIL–BEL, 1995

Steve Gadd
K Custom Session Line, 2004

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Ventilating A Drum Room

I just built a studio, using Mark Parsons' *Keep The Peace: A Musicians' Guide To Soundproofing* as my most important reference. The room measures 13x12x7, with no windows. It has dual doors with studio-style weatherstripping, and I installed a split system for heating and cooling.

The split HVAC system circulates the air that's already in the room, rather than bringing in fresh air from outside. I haven't found the air quality to be a problem (as long as I open the door at least once an hour or so), but should I worry? My contractor suggests a bathroom-style fan (quiet, but expensive) through both walls, with the inlet and outlet offset from one another to minimize sound leakage. What do you think?
Wayne Henry

Julia Lynn
A well-sealed drum room can benefit from the inclusion of a ventilation system.

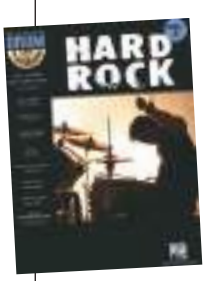
Keep The Peace author Mark Parsons replies, "In reality, your room probably isn't completely airtight. However, just to be on the safe side, let's suppose that your 1,000–cubic-foot studio is sealed like a submarine and thus has absolutely zero air exchange. In this situation, you might think the issue would be oxygen level (and that would certainly become absolutely critical, eventually). But long before that happens we run into the problem of excessive carbon dioxide, which causes fatigue, as well as irritation of the eyes and throat.

"The level of CO^2 currently considered safe for healthy adults by OSHA for an eight-hour work day is 5,000 parts per million. It would take an average person approximately seven hours to exhale enough CO^2 to drive levels this high in our hypothetical room. But your goal should be comfortable and productive occupants, as opposed to merely 'undamaged' ones. And for that, experts agree on a CO^2 concentration of 1,000 ppm or less as a marker of adequate ventilation. The average person could reach those levels in our room in about an hour.

"In light of everything discussed above, opening the door on an hourly basis would probably suffice in your situation. However, I'd still consider adding the fan suggested by your contractor. For one thing, you may wish to rehearse or record with a full band in the room, which would dramatically increase the CO^2 build-up. In addition, there may simply be times when weather or noise-related factors will make it impractical to open the door."

Play-Along Tracks

I'm looking for tracks without drums that I could use in the studio, similar to what I've seen drummers use at the Modern Drummer Festivals. Any direction you can give will be much appreciated.
Josh Hilliker



Most of the tracks used at festivals and clinics by recording artists are copies of their own studio recordings, with the drum tracks left off. Unless you have access to similar recordings, you won't be able to duplicate that sort of material.

As an alternative, there are several excellent tracks available on the ***Turn It Up & Lay It Down*** CD series. Volumes I and II have strictly bass tracks, but volumes III through VI have a full-band recordings in a variety of styles (rock, jazz, funk, etc.). Check them out at www.drumfun.com.

In addition, Hal Leonard Publications offers a Drum Play-Along series, which offers book/CD packages with transcriptions of drum parts to familiar hit songs. The CDs include tracks with and without drums. Each book/CD package focuses on a different musical style. Go to www.musicdispatch.com for more information.

Other instructional drum book/CD packages offer play-along versions of the material that they include. Some of these are exercises; others are full musical tracks. You may need to do some Internet searching to find titles that suit your needs. Publishers that offer these packages include Hal Leonard, Alfred, and Mel Bay.

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Triggering SPD-S Sounds

I have a Roland TD-6 V-Drums set, as well as a Roland SPD-S sampling pad. I' m able to get the SPD-S to trigger the sounds in the TD-6 module, but not the other way around. What MIDI settings do I need to make in order to trigger the sampled sounds from the SPD-S using the TD-6?

James Evangelos

Using a Roland TD-6 V-Drums kit to trigger sounds in an SPD-S sampler is a matter of matching MIDI note numbers.

Roland drum & percussion division manager Steve Fisher replies, " You' ll need to match the MIDI note numbers of the SPD' s pads with the pad note numbers in the TD-6V module. It doesn' t matter which module you make the changes in, as long as the numbers are matched. Below are the steps to view the note numbers in the SPD-S, and how to change them in the TD-6V.

" First, connect the MIDI Out of the TD-6V to the MIDI In of the SPD-S. Next, to view the note numbers in the SPD-S: 1) Press EDIT. 2) Press PAGE right (>) to select ' PAD CONTROL.' 3) Press ENTER. 4) Press PAGE right (>) to select ' Note #.' 5) Hit each pad on the SPD-S to view the note number assignment. By default, the note numbers are 60–68 starting from pad 1.

" To change the MIDI note numbers for the pads connected to the TD-6: 1) Press EDIT. 2) Press CURSOR right (>) to select ' CONTROL.' 3) Press ENTER. 4) Press CURSOR right (>) to select ' Note No.' 5) Hit the pad (connected to the TD-6) that you want to change the note number of. 6) Press the + or - button to choose the desired number. For example, if the sound (wave) you want to trigger in the SPD-S is on pad 5, choose note #64 for the pad that' s connected to the TD-6. 7) Repeat steps 5–6 for the remaining pads. 8) Press KIT when you' re finished. The new assignments are saved in the kit automatically.

" Note: These settings can be made on a per-Kit / per-Patch basis, therefore you' ll have to make the assignments in each kit of the TD-6V or each patch of the SPD-S. Good luck!"

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS
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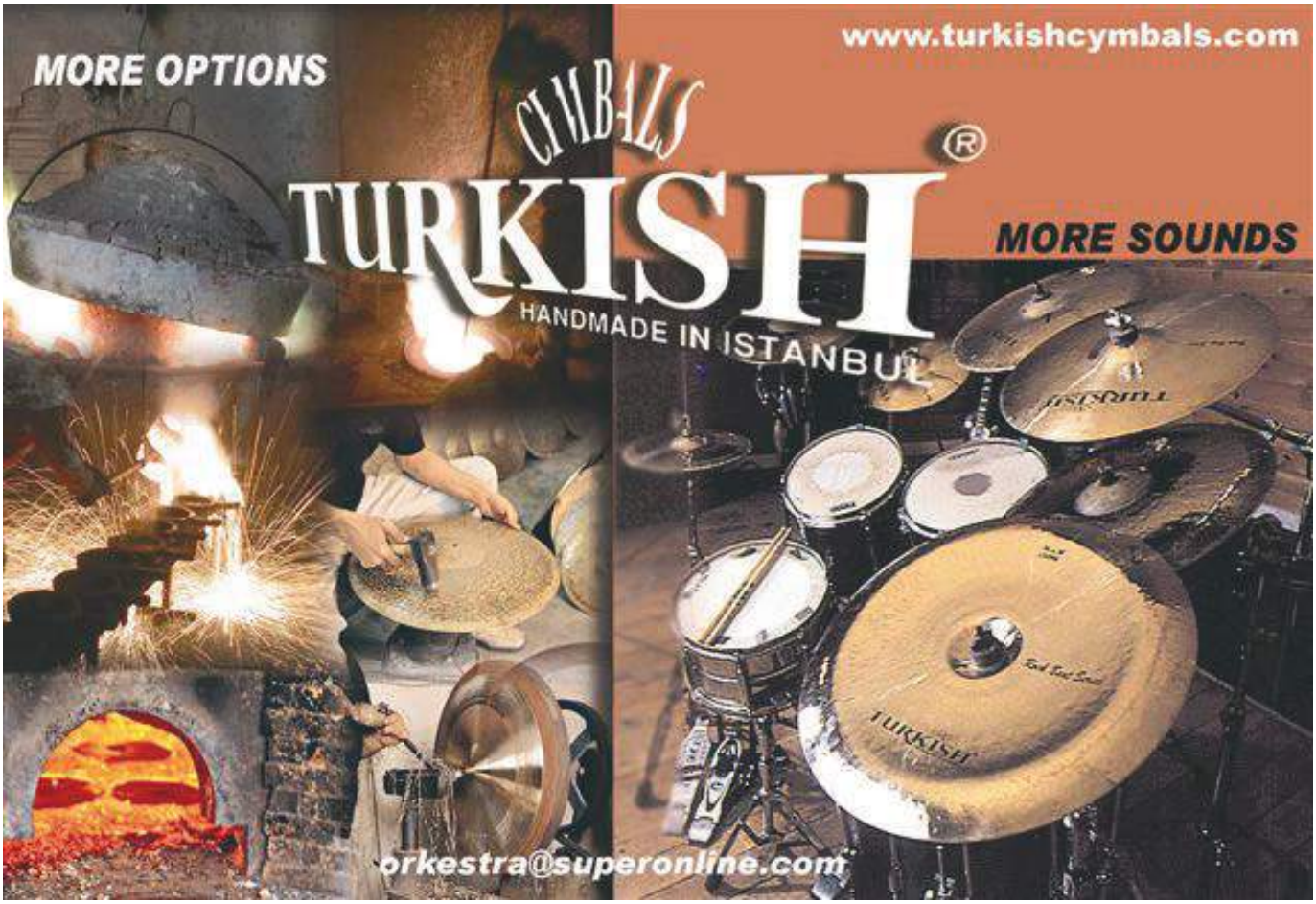

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Q+A

Joey Jordison's Clicky Bass Drum Sound

I know you use a Remo PowerStroke 3 bass drum batter head, but how do you tune it to get that clicky metal sound? I've tried loosening the batter head, but then the feel isn't right. I'd appreciate any suggestions you have.
Dan

Thanks for your questions, Dan. I have the resonant heads on my bass drums tighter than the batters, but not overly tight. I keep the batter heads pretty loose for recording, with solid feather pillows in the drums to help reduce the ring and accentuate the click sound you describe.

Getting that click sound also depends on the pedal and beater you're using. I use Pearl Eliminator pedals, and I swear by them. I also suggest using a solid wood or plastic beater; felt won't work for you. Finally, try putting a Danmar PDKP or Metal Kick impact pad on the bass drum head for added click. I hope this helps you!

Quick Beats

SIMON PHILLIPS

Text and photo by Joe Perry

Place of birth: London, England
Influences: Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Grady Tate, Tony Williams, Steve Gadd, Lenny White, Louie Bellson, Danny Seraphine, Billy Cobham
Hobbies/interests: Studio work, motor racing
How I relax: Drive go-carts, go out to eat, solder cable for my studio
Favorite food: Caprese, guacamole
Favorite junk food: Quesadillas
Favorite drink: Tanqueray gin & Schweppes tonic, with lime
Favorite TV show: *The Sopranos*
Favorite movie: *Dam Busters*
Favorite album: *Kind Of Blue* (Miles Davis)
Vehicle I drive: Mercedes SLK 350
Other instruments I play: keyboards
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A race car driver
Next up-and-coming drummer: Eric Harland, Keith Carlock
Place I'd like to visit: India
I wish I'd played drums on: Any song that has a drum machine on it
Most prized possession: My son Rylan
Person I would like to talk to: Leonardo Da Vinci
Musicians I'd like to work with: John McLaughlin, Joe Zawinul
Most embarrassing moment on stage: Albert Hall, London, 1983, with Jimmy Page on the first ARMS concert. I forgot the arrangement to "Stairway To Heaven."
Most memorable performance: ARMS concert, 1983, Madison Square Garden, New York. Lots of famous people on stage.
Most unusual venue played: Recorded on a bridge in London
Biggest venue played: Wembley Stadium, London, with Toto in 1996, for 88,000 people

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Mike Mangini

On Hand Technique

Q+A

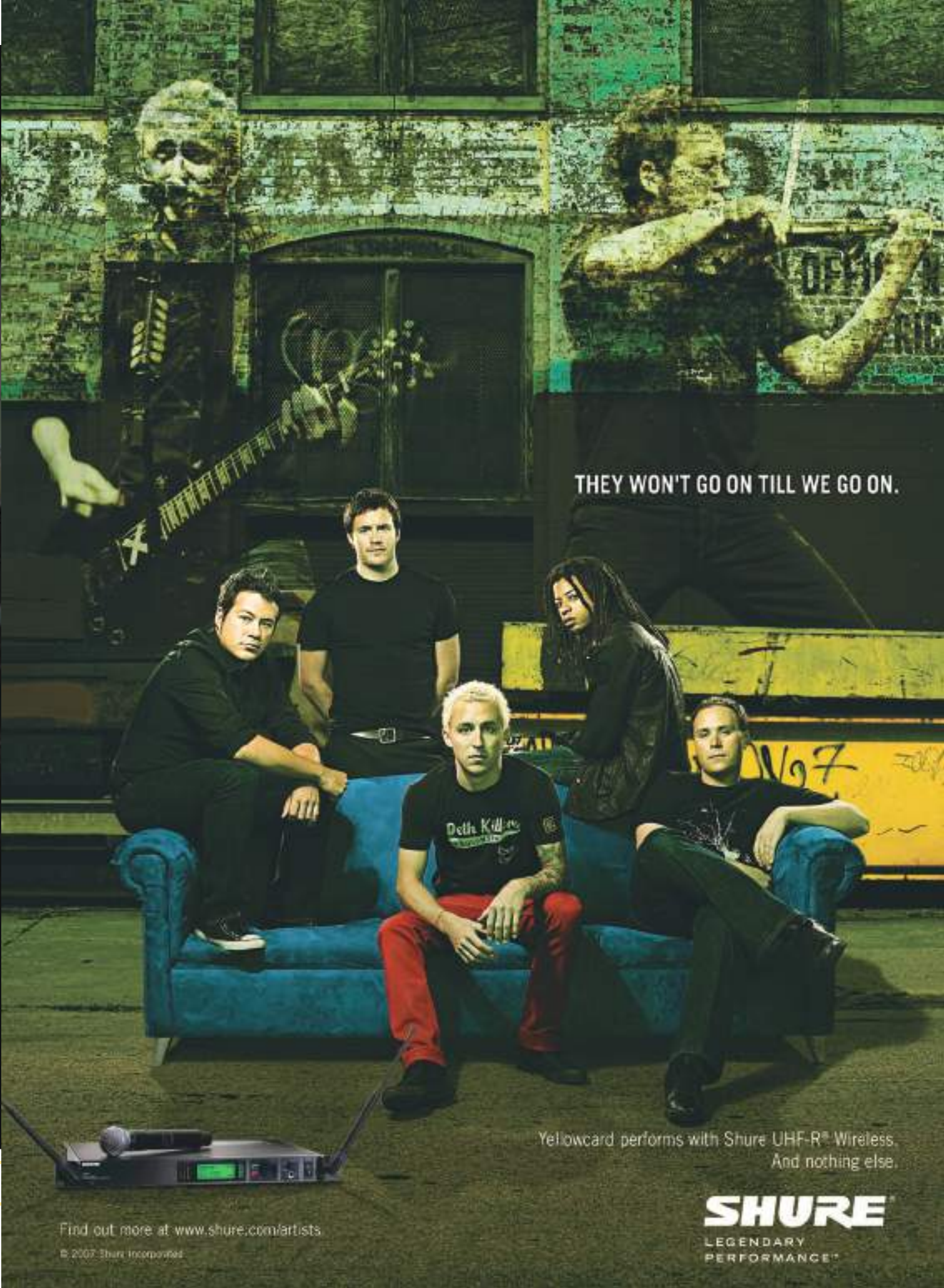
You are one of the most amazing drummers on Earth, and an inspiration for many drummers here in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Could you describe your wrist and finger technique in detail? I am a traditional-grip player, but I have been checking your grip style, and I think it could really work for my right hand. Any advice would be great. Thanks, and God bless you.
Salvador Rubalcava Gonzalez

Hi, Salvador, and thanks for your kind words. Here' s a quick tutorial to help you understand my hand technique.

1. Start with your bare hand. Extend your fingers, flex your upper arm and back muscles, and shake your hand as if you' ve consumed a half-gallon of strong coffee. Note that the hand should shake vertically, not side to side.
2. Loosen up the fingers so that they go a bit limp. You may need to flex your tricep muscle more to continue the shaking without tightening up the lower forearm.
3. As the fingers move closer together (because they' re not extended anymore), use your other hand to place a stick between the thumb and all fingers of the shaking hand.
4. Keep your eyes on the shaking hand, making sure that there is space between your thumb and index finger.
5. Attempt to slow down the shaking to the point that you can control the motion. This takes lots of practice, but it is far better, quicker, and easier than working from slow to fast. You' ll notice that the main motion comes from the wrist, while a small derivative motion comes from the fingers. If you move the stick with too much finger motion, you' re likely to close the fulcrum gap and tighten up your wrist. That' s bad, okay? Don' t close that gap.

If you need more information, my Web site (www.mikemangini.com) has tons of photos and footage, and my *Rhythm Knowledge Volume One* book has descriptions of my technique. Good Luck, God bless, and don' t take your eyes off your hands!

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS
rvh@moderndrummer.com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Dino Perrucci

Stanton MOORE

Back Home To A Bigger Sound

When the hurricane arrived and the levees broke, Stanton Moore's studio/rehearsal facility took the hit and was later declared structurally unsound. Still, Stanton headed back to town to record his solo release *Stanton Moore III*. It felt like the right thing to do. And Stanton did what a true New Orleans son would have done: He recorded in the ancient Preservation Hall.

"I just wanted to get back to the comfort zone," Stanton explains. "It sounds amazing in there, and you don't have to play so hard. Sometimes when you do that, the drums choke up. If you were to go into the Preservation Hall with big drums and hit them too hard, you'd over-saturate the room. With a small kit and a loose, open grip, things sound great."

For most of the tracks, the kit was Stanton's Gretsch with an 18" bass drum. The exception was a cover of Zeppelin's "When The Levee Breaks," which demanded a 26". In the final mix, both bop and Bonzo bass drums sound huge.

"When I'm playing 'bigger,'" Stanton continues, "I'm trying to play the drums in such a way that they resonate at their peak. With the 18", I tune the front a little tighter and muffle with one felt strip. I tune it to where it resonates or 'speaks,' without the heads *too* loose. For years I've been playing 26" bass drums as well, and somehow that helps me get a bigger sound out of the 18". It stresses the importance of playing *off* the head, not burying the beater."

Aside from gigs and recordings with Galactic, Garage A Trois, and Corrosion Of Conformity, Stanton's savvy grooves (and new de-tuned snare sounds) can be heard on singer-songwriter Irma Thomas's Grammy-nominated album, *After The Rain*. Otherwise, SM is working on a new book/DVD package revealing his approach to funk, as influenced by Johnny Vidacovich and the great James Black. Speaking of the latter, Stanton enthuses, "*Dude*, if you hear him on 'Hook And Sling,' you'll swear it's Zigaboo. It'll blow your mind."

T. Bruce Wittet

STANTON MOORE

Dino Perrucci

Danny GOTTLIEB
Busier Than Ever

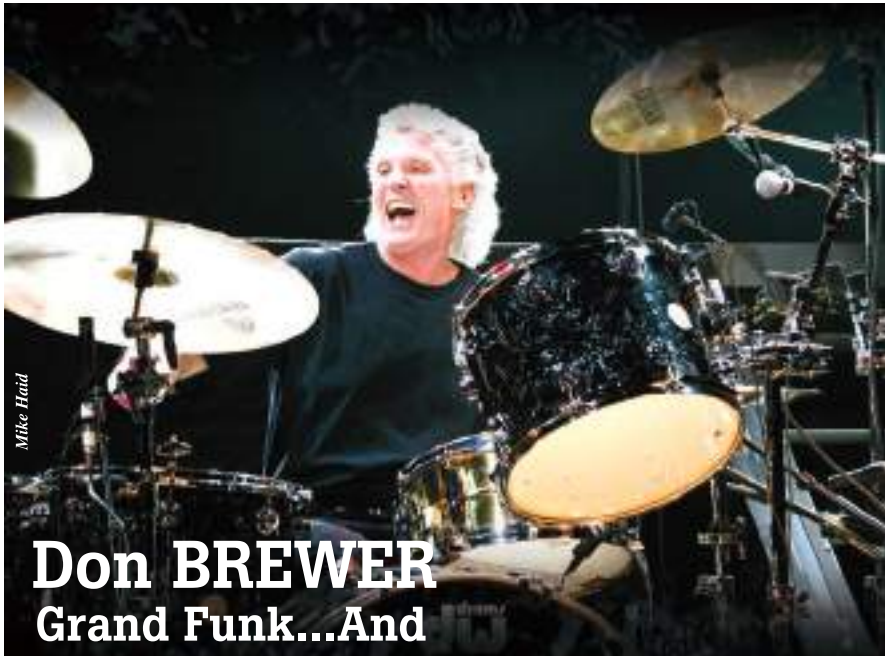
Averaging almost two hundred performances every year for the past thirty years, Danny Gottlieb—original drummer with The Pat Metheny Group—continues to be an in-demand jazz drummer both in the US and in Europe. Danny can be heard on Mark Egan's new recording, *As We Speak*, and he played eleven gigs in as many days last September to promote the album. Gottlieb is also featured on new recordings by The Mel Bay 3 (*Jazz Hits, Vol. 1*), Swiss composer George Gruntz (*Tiger By The Tail*), Swedish pianist Per Danielson (*Trio*), German sax player Lutz Buchner (*Ring*), and keyboardist Pete Levin (*Deacon Blues*). And the list goes on and on.

During the past two years, Gottlieb has been a frequent guest with The NDR Hamburg (Germany) Radio Big Band. Recent projects with them include concerts with British arranger Steve Gray; music of Moussorgsky ("Pictures At An Exhibition") arranged for jazz band by German Jorg Achim Keller; and the Miles Davis-Gil Evans classics "Porgy And Bess" and "Sketches Of Spain." Gottlieb also appeared last year with The Frankfurt HR Big Band and Radio Orchestra in a big band/orchestral collaboration, as well as concerts with bass legend Jack Bruce and sax master Pee Wee Ellis.

Since 2005, Danny and his wife, Beth (who's also a percussionist) have been featured members of Gary Sinise's twelve-piece Lt. Dan Band. They've played benefits and concerts for the troops as well as veterans, and they even appeared at the *CSI NY* studio party in Los Angeles. The Gottliebs also performed together for the EPCOT Christmas Show in Orlando, Florida (where they live), and continue to give percussion concerts as The Gottlieb Duo.

Last October, Danny played a concert in Germany with seventy-eight-year-old American sax legend Herb Geller. "Herb was the lead alto player on the 1959 recording *Art Pepper Plus 11*, and I always wanted to perform that music live," Gottlieb explains. "This concert was special for me, as that recording was the first time I ever heard Mel Lewis on drums. Since Mel became important in my life, this was a very nostalgic concert."

Beyond his busy playing schedule, Gottlieb is a full-time assistant professor of jazz studies at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. He also teaches private lessons at Rollins College in Winter Park. Current projects include seven instructional DVDs from Mel Bay and three instructional DVDs featuring lessons with Joe Morello. To keep up with Danny's hectic schedule, visit www.DannyGottlieb.com. **Lauren Vogel Weiss**



Mike Haid

Don BREWER
Grand Funk...And Another American Band

Legendary Grand Funk Railroad drummer/vocalist Don Brewer is back in the spotlight, with the new *Grand Funk Railroad Greatest Hits* CD/DVD collection on Capitol, and as the touring drummer for another legendary Michigan rock icon, Bob Seger. Brewer, whose '70s power trio, Grand Funk Railroad, sold out New York's Shea Stadium in just seventy-two hours (quicker than The Beatles), was instrumental in putting together the footage for the new GFR DVD, which includes a rare clip from the historic Shea Stadium concert from 1971. Brewer was also able to find a high-quality video clip of a GFR PBS TV performance from 1969. "After not seeing or hearing these live clips for twenty or thirty years," Don says, "I was amazed at how tight we were back then." The new CD/DVD package also includes footage from a GFR reunion show in 1997 and the original uncut promo film for the number-1 *We're An American Band* album. The CD features fourteen classic GFR cuts.

After an eleven-year absence from the business, Bob Seger has a new recording, *Face The Promise*, and he recruited Brewer for the tour. The drummer had previously toured with Seger in 1983 and again in 1987. "The relationship between Grand Funk and Bob Seger goes back to the mid-'60s, when we were all playing local gigs around Michigan," Brewer explains. "I enjoy the challenge of learning and performing what other drummers have created for Seger's music. Bob is very cool about letting me put my own personality into his music. It's a whole different mindset than when I'm playing my own creations with Grand Funk."

Brewer claims his playing style hasn't changed much. But he says he has made efforts to focus on his time and groove by working with a click. "I have a special visual click that I use on tour, a light that flashes the tempo," Don reveals. "I can control the tempo by following the light without having a click banging away in my ear. This allows me the freedom to let the time breathe with a natural feel, like the early Grand Funk recordings." **Mike Haid**

DRUM DATES
This month's important events in drumming history

Zutty Singleton was born on 5/14/1898, **Mel Lewis** on 5/10/29, and **John Bonham** on 5/31/48.

Billy Higgins passed away on 5/4/01, **Elvin Jones** on 5/18/04.

May 1971: Traffic expands its lineup by adding session drummer **Jim Gordon**, freeing **Jim Capaldi** for more vocal spotlights.

May 1981: Mötley Crüe (with **Tommy Lee**) make their live debut, opening for Y&T at the Starwood in Hollywood, California.

In May of 1974, Led Zeppelin (with **John Bonham**) launches their record label *Swan Song*. Two years later, in May of '76, their album *Presence* hits number-1 on the US charts. And in May of 1988, the band reunites with **Jason Bonham** filling in for his late dad at Madison Square Garden for Atlantic Records' fortieth-anniversary concert.

Aaron HARRIS Of Isis
Art-Metal Mechanic

A couple of years ago, legendary art-rock pioneers King Crimson were asked to share the bill with modern day prog-metal masters Tool. More recently, Tool invited young "art metal" explorers ISIS to tour with them. This speaks volumes about the impact that the cerebral metal quintet is having on the ever-expanding metal scene. In its nearly ten-year existence, ISIS has grown from an angry, loud metal band to a dynamic musical entity, capable of beautiful, mysterious, and maddening soundscapes that can inconspicuously morph before your ears, from one end of the sonic spectrum to the other and back again.

The band's new release, *In The Absence Of Truth*, reveals a more mature overall sound, due in part to the thoughtful melodic drumming of Aaron Harris. While touring with Tool, Harris was inspired by drummer Danny Carey. The self-taught Harris has always taken a minimalist approach to the more complex odd-meter material—until now. "Danny Carey turned me on to the drumming of Bill Bruford," explains Harris. "Once I started checking out what Bruford was doing, and how he was constantly creating new musical ideas on the drums and exploring unique drumset configurations, it inspired me to open up my playing and explore different drumming concepts for our new music."

Unlike many progressive drummers, Harris plays a small four-piece kit with minimal cymbals, and he subscribes to the "less is more" theory. "On the new record," he shares, "I used the toms a lot more to create melodies. I also used some electronics." Despite his streamlined approach, though, the drummer did find reasons to use double bass on the disc, the very first time he's done so.

Harris considers himself to be a dynamic player and feels that his role in the band is to help set the mood and lay the groundwork for the atmospheric layers of guitars. He is also involved in a virtual band called The Los Angeles Digital Noise Academy. Composed of about fifteen musicians, members of The LADNA transfer, download, record, and edit musical tracks to create songs in the virtual world, without ever seeing one another face to face. The LADNA music is scheduled for release on artist/producer Ken Andrews' Dinosaur Fight record label in early 2007.

Mike Haid

Mark Dawursk

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- **Freddie Gruber** (drumming guru): 5/27/27
- **Levon Helm** (The Band): 5/26/42
- **Billy Cobham** (drum legend): 5/16/44
- **Bill Kreutzmann** (The Grateful Dead): 5/7/46
- **Butch Trucks** (The Allman Brothers): 5/11/47
- **Bill Ward** (Black Sabbath): 5/5/48
- **Bill Bruford** (Yes, Earthworks): 5/17/48
- **Paulinho Da Costa** (percussion great): 5/31/48
- **Prairie Prince** (The Tubes): 5/7/50
- **Sly Dunbar** (reggae master): 5/10/52
- **Alex Van Halen** (Van Halen): 5/8/53
- **Mark Herndon** (Alabama): 5/11/55
- **Stan Lynch** (ex-Tom Petty): 5/21/55
- **Will Kennedy** (ex-Yellowjackets): 5/9/57
- **Mel Gaynor** (Simple Minds): 5/29/59
- **Charley Drayton** (sessions): 5/9/65
- **Sean Kinney** (Alice In Chains): 5/27/66
- **Dave Abbruzzese** (ex-Pearl Jam): 5/17/68
- **Todd Sucherman** (Styx): 5/2/69
- **Alan White** (ex-Oasis): 5/26/72
- **Joey Zehr** (The Click Five): 5/10/83

Darkane's Peter WILDOER
Maturing Metalhead

When most folks think of extreme-metal drumming, they tend to picture a guy like Peter Wildoer, especially during his days with the progressive metal band Agretator in the early '90s and during his stint with Arch Enemy in '97—someone able to juggle a swarm of time signatures at warp speed and with massive power and precision.

Today, Wildoer is still displaying his blinding and stylish assault in the Swedish death/thrash metal group Darkane. "Maturity is such a boring word, but I think my drumming is a bit more mature now," he says of his work on Darkane's latest album, *Layers Of Lies*, and on material intended for Darkane's next CD. "I can be more laid back than I used to be. But whenever there's time for me to show off some cool chops, I definitely do."

Take "Organic Canvas," for instance. It contains "really crazy" parts, especially during its oddly grooving instrumental. And the finale "Creation Insane" features 16th notes that swarm from all corners of Wildoer's setup—a custom Tama Starclassic that's as balanced as his drumming style. "I tend to have a very symmetrical kit," the drummer explains, "with two toms in front, two drums to my left—a snare and a tom—and two toms to my right," as well as two hammered Meinl crashes for my left hand, and two for my right."

Wildoer's attention to symmetry was inspired partly by Gary Chester's classic instructional book, *The New Breed*. "It's a four-way coordination book that teaches you about playing with all four limbs while singing, so that you have five different things to think about. It opened up to me that I had all this empty space to my left that I didn't use."

The equilibrium Peter manifests with his drums also extends to what he listens to when he's not behind them. "I listen to everything from trio jazz or classical to Cannibal Corpse," he reveals. "Being open-minded is very important. So is not giving up. If you set a goal, like wanting to be able to play a certain song, you should really work hard towards achieving it."

Jeff Perlah

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TAYE GoKit™ is the professional solution for small stages and on-the-go gigging. It is designed to be articulate, warm and full. This scaled-down drumset delivers Taye's commitment to making great sounding drums. It's the perfect drum set for today's in-demand drummer – just ask Mike!

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TAYE GoPack™ Drum Bags, a compact set of three, are designed specifically for the GoKit. These sturdy padded bags fit today's smaller cars and taxis, making one trip load-ins a reality. The GoKick bag has enough room to add a regular cymbal bag. The tom bag takes the stack of three GoToms and GoSnare plus a throne seat or timbale. The hardware bag fits GoKit hardware and accessories for a fast getaway.

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UPDATE NEWS

Congratulations to Van Halen's **Alex Van Halen** and R.E.M.'s **Bill Berry** on being inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame.

Vinnie Paul is on the self-titled debut by Hell Yeah.

Jeremy Hummel, formerly of Breaking Benjamin, is involved in several new projects. Listen to his new rock band, Until We Rise, at http://www.myspace.com/untilwerise. Jeremy also plans to enter the studio with his jazz/fusion project Electric Volcano Experiment later this year.

Who said drumming and business doesn't mix? **Darrin Pfeiffer**, drummer for Goldfinger, has started his own record label, High 4 Records, based out of Toronto, Canada, where Darrin lives with his wife. High 4 has two bands, Crush Luther and Cauterize, with new records out. All the details can be found at www.high4records.com.

Alicia Warrington is no longer playing with the all-girl group Lillix. She is now writing and playing guitar on two projects, one with actress/singer Leisha Hailey, and one with singer/songwriter Camilla Grey. Alicia also appeared on the Disney Channel TV show *Hannah Montana*. For more on Alicia, visit www.aliciawarrington.com.

Session drummer **Gerry Hansen** plays and produces eighteen-year-old singer-songwriter Spencer Durham's second CD, *Much More Than Words*.

Steve Barney has been busy with his studio work in the UK and Germany along with touring with the group Sugababes and pop star Ronan Keating.

Rich Beddoe is on Finger Eleven's *Them Vs. You Vs. Me*.

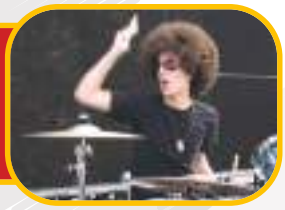
Fred Eltringham, hot off a tour with The Dixie Chicks, is now touring with The Wreckers.

Tim Barrett on the new Disciple release, *Scars Remain*.

Johnny Douglas is now with Sammy Hagar & The Wabos.

Tony Mason is on Norah Jones' latest single, "I've Been Thinking About You." He's also on Adam Levy's new one, *Washing Day*, as well as Danelia Cotton's latest CD. You can catch Tony playing live dates with guitarist Jim Campilongo. For more info, visit myspace.com/masonio.

Matty Amendola is touring around the US in the house band with the dance troupe JUMP. For more info, visit www.myspace.com/mattyamendola.



Producer/singer/songwriter Butch Walker and drummer **Darren Dodd** have a new band, 1969, whose new CD is called *Maya*. For more info, check out myspace.com/1969theband.

Brian Ulrich is on Million/Billion's *Ready. Fire. Aim.*

Marko Marcinko is on Dave Liebman's *Back On The Corner*.

Rodney Howard will join Avril Lavigne on her 2007 world-wide tour.

Grant Collins can be heard on the upcoming Collins/Wardingham Project CD, *Interactive*.

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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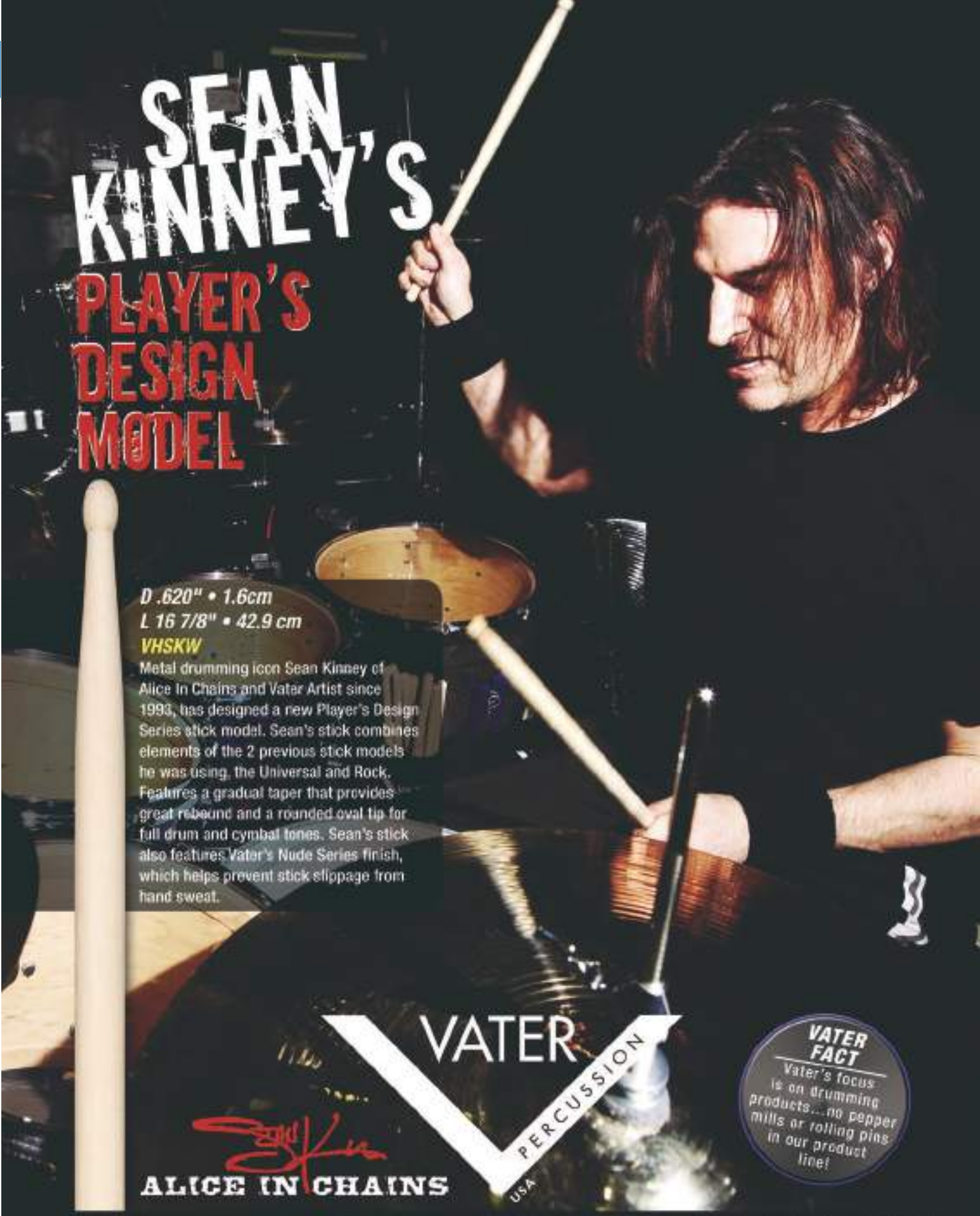
SEAN KINNEY'S

PLAYER'S DESIGN MODEL



D .620" • 1.6cm
L 16 7/8" • 42.9 cm
VHSKW

Metal drumming icon Sean Kinney of Alice In Chains and Vater Artist since 1993, has designed a new Player's Design Series stick model. Sean's stick combines elements of the 2 previous stick models he was using, the Universal and Rock. Features a gradual taper that provides great rebound and a rounded oval tip for full drum and cymbal tones. Sean's stick also features Vater's Nude Series finish, which helps prevent stick slippage from hand sweat.

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Sonor SQ² Golden Madrone Vintage Maple Kit

<< Just One Choice Out Of Thousands

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- High-quality shells and finishes
- Loads of choices
- Price will be daunting for some

Sonor is out to re-establish itself as the preeminent builder of drums that meet the standards—and fulfill the dreams—of the most discerning buyers.

Sonor's new SQ^2 series replaces the German manufacturer's Designer series at the top of their professional line. The new series offers drummers the opportunity to tailor their drumset to their own specifications. They can use the Sonor Drum Configurator online at Sonor's Web site, choose a kit, print a copy, and take it to a local dealer. Sonor gets a copy of the order at the same time, and the kit is built once Sonor receives confirmation from the dealer. Since Sonor has the original order form as created by the customer, they're guaranteed to get it right the first time.

So...Whaddya Want?

The SQ^2 concept is all about choices. Available shell materials include birch, maple, beech, and acrylic. Each shell type has its own response curve, which is clearly explained on the Web site. Wood shells are offered in Vintage, Thin, Medium, and Heavy thicknesses. Then there's a large selection of finishes, from veneer to stains and lacquers, including fades. You can also choose to have veneers on the outside of the shells, on the inside, or both. Hardware is available in chrome, black chrome, or gold finish.

We Struck Gold

Our review kit featured a Golden Madrone veneer, matched with gold lugs, tension rods, and mounting hardware. The drums sported a new solid-cast version of Sonor's twin-mallet badge. It's an understatement to say that these drums looked absolutely stunning.

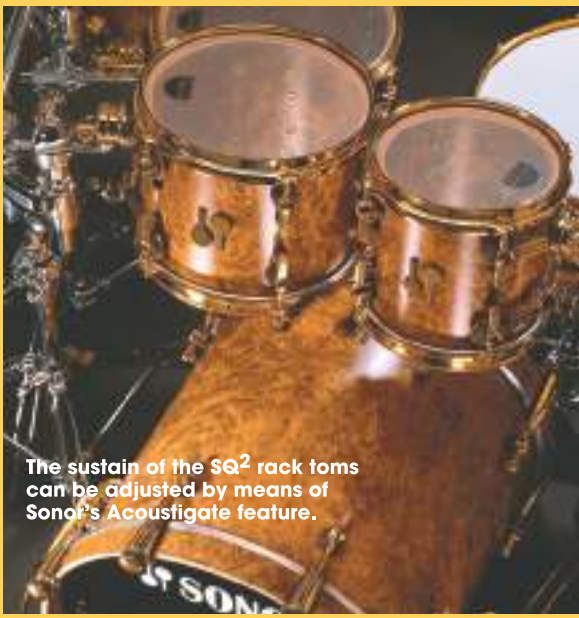
The shells selected for our kit were Vintage maple, meaning thin maple shells with reinforcing rings. The toms and snare were 4 mm thick, plus 2 mm for the ring. The bass drum was 6 mm thick, plus 2 mm for the ring. The toms featured 2.3 mm Power hoops, while the snare was fitted with die-cast hoops.

The tuning lugs attach to the shell at two points, which eliminates torque during tuning. Inside each lug is Sonor's Tune Safe mechanism, which secures your tuning by holding on to the threads. All of the lugs, the bass drum spur mounts, and the floor tom leg brackets are cushioned against the shells with gaskets.

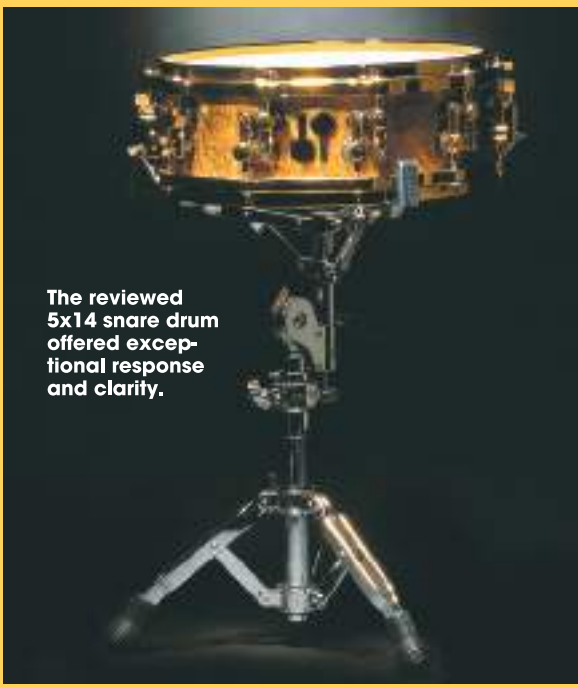
The tom mounts have a split nylon ball that allows the L-shaped rod to rotate to any position, as well as to move closer to or farther from the ball. This provides great positioning options. Winged bolts on the mounts made it easy to set the toms where I wanted them. The same bolts are also found on the floor tom and bass drum leg adjustments. The bass drum spurs have memory locks, which speeds the setup.

Sonor's Easy-Grip rubber-edged knobs are used on the height adjustments for the toms, the resonance adjustment on the tom mounts, the bass drum tension rods, and the hi-hat clutch.

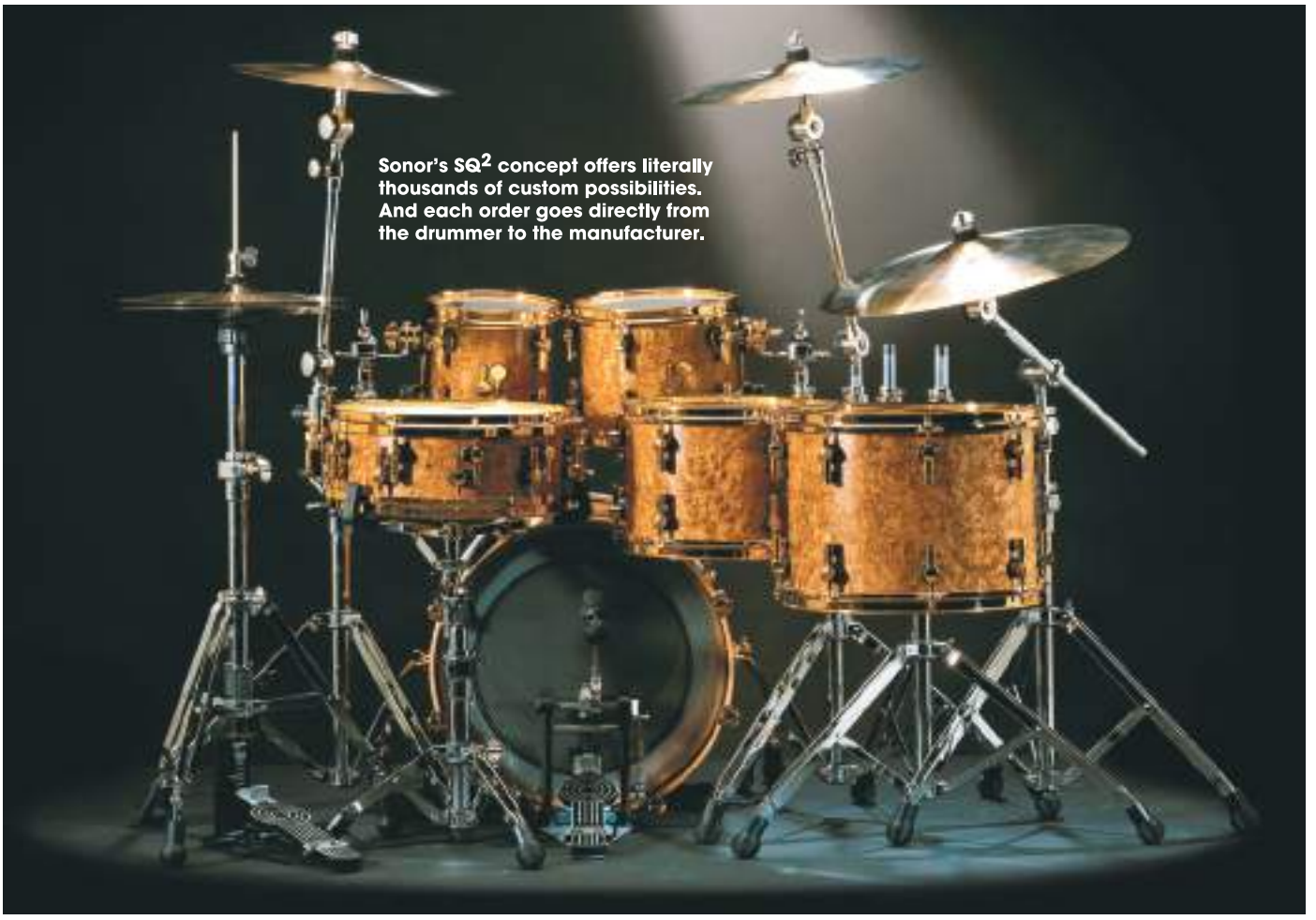
It should come as no surprise that an emblem involving mallets could be striking. This one is.



The sustain of the SQ^2 rack toms can be adjusted by means of Sonor's Acoustigate feature.



The reviewed 5x14 snare drum offered exceptional response and clarity.



Sonor's SQ^2 concept offers literally thousands of custom possibilities. And each order goes directly from the drummer to the manufacturer.

Dial In Your Choice Of Sustain

The tom mounts use a new SQ^2 H-bar suspension mounting system. The mount is placed around the lugs, so there' s no direct contact with the shell. It also features an Easy-Grip knob at the bottom of the middle bar, which is called the Acoustigate. This feature allows you to tailor the resonance that you want from the toms. If the Acoustigate is tightened, more resonance is tapped off into the mount, giving you less sustain. If the knob is looser, you get more sustain. It' s a simple-to-use feature, and it works very well. The tone of the Vintage maple shells was warm and deep, and the Acoustigate allowed me to get the most out of it.

About The Sound

The SQ^2 kit was especially fun to play because the drum sounds were so distinct and clean. Any sort of fill or tom pattern came out clearly, with plenty of space between the voices. The toms could be tuned over a fairly wide range, but to my ear they favored the low end. The bass drum possessed a deeper sound than I' ve ever heard from any 20" drum, and it provided a great foundation for the kit. It could be tuned up into jazz range, but it was happier down in the depths.

The snare was pure fire, with an extremely clean sound at all volume levels. Rimshots sounded and felt like lightning strikes. This was simply one of the most enjoyable snares I have ever played.

Standing In

SQ^2 drums are sold a la carte, but stands are readily available. The 600 series hardware package provided with our review set included two convertible boom cymbal stands, a tom stand with a cymbal arm, a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, and a bass drum pedal.

The P 693 bass drum pedal featured Sonor' s Docking Station, which stays connected to the bass hoop. The Smart Connect locks the pedal to the Station with a pull of a lever on the side.

The stands set up solidly and were easy to position, with memory locks for height setting. The base of the HH 654 hi-hat stand rotated to position the footboard and accommodate other pedals. The tripod also featured one leg that could be moved independently from the others (as did the cymbal stands) for even more positioning flexibility. The hi-hat was incredibly smooth and had a wide range of spring tensions. Good stuff all around.

Summing Up

Our review kit, wonderful though it was, is just one example of a complete design philosophy. The thousands of available shell-construction, drum-size, finish, and hardware options make the SQ^2 line the most versatile that Sonor has produced. And the Sonor Configurator is set up so that the manufacturer can fill orders accurately.

As evidenced by our review kit, SQ^2 drums are beautiful, and they sound great. The price is high, but so is the quality and workmanship. If you can afford drums like these, there' s little doubt that you' re going to *want* drums like these.

THE NUMBERS

SQ2 Golden Madrone Vintage Maple kit (shell pack) . . .$10,985
Includes a 5x14 snare, 7x8, 8x10, and 9x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and an 18x20 bass drum.

600 Series hardware package $2,000

(804) 515-1900, www.sonor.com

Quick Looks

Hot Sticks Artisticks

by Rick Van Horn

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina virtually obliterated the little town of Waveland, Mississippi, leaving almost every employee of the Hot Sticks drumstick company homeless. Fortunately, the factory—located further inland in the town of Kiln—was still standing, although it lacked power and other services. The workers set up a tent city on the factory grounds and lived there, commune-style, for the next several months.

Ya gotta love a company that can go through something like that and continue to manufacture its products at all—let alone develop something new. But develop they have. Hot Sticks' new Artisticks series offers a collection of striking, full-color graphic designs applied to their high-quality hickory sticks. These graphics are sharp, clear, and durable (they don't chip off under playing, and they don't rub off onto your hands), which is no small achievement when it comes to artwork applied to a cylindrical, porous wood surface.

Dozens of artistic themes are offered, including flames, tribal patterns, animal prints, gothic metal looks, money, and at least one good-looking bikini babe. The complete library of patterns is viewable on the Hot Sticks Web site. Drummers are invited to submit original art for consideration; their ideas might become part of that library. Custom imprints are also available as special orders.

The Artisticks graphics are highly noticeable to the eye—but not to the hand. Even with the most involved graphic that covers the greatest area of the stick, all you feel is a very comfortable, smooth surface that's moderately lacquered for an excellent grip.

Artisticks are available in 7A, RK, 5A, 5B, 2B, and 3S models, in nylon and wood tips. All of those models tend to have fairly short tapers for impact power and durability. The Artisticks are well made, they look cool, and at $14.95 per pair they're an affordable way to add visual zip to your performance. Check 'em out.

(228) 467-6596,
www.hotsticksdrumsticks.com

TRX Crash-Rides

<< Designed For Double Duty

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- Wide range of sonic variety between models
- Effective compromise of ride and crash functions
- Stick rebound is affected at high ride impact

Crash-ride cymbals came about in the early ' 60s for one simple reason: convenience. The idea was to reduce the number of cymbals a drummer needed to carry to a gig by getting double duty out of at least one of them. Most drummers at the time played jazz or light pop music, and they tended to ride and crash on all of their cymbals anyway. Why not have one cymbal actually designed to do both?

Convenience is still important to a lot of drummers. Versatility of sonic performance is also a desirable quality. With that in mind, TRX has introduced 20" crash-ride cymbals in each of their four model series.

First, Meet The TRX

In keeping with its overall brand name, each TRX model line has an acronymic name that describes its basic acoustic character. For example, BRT cymbals emphasize bright, high frequencies and cutting penetration. They' re heavy and unlathed, with a brilliant finish. The ALT (as in an alternative to the BRT, but still pretty loud) models offer a small step down in pitch from the BRT cymbals. The cymbals have an unlathed bell, thin lathing on the body, and varied hammering.

The design of the TRX crash-rides combines the pronounced bell and low profile of a ride with the medium weight and taper of a crash.

The trick in making a crash-ride cymbal is that you can' t make it too thick and still have it crash effectively, and you can' t make it too thin and have it work as a ride cymbal the way you' d expect. TRX seems to have found the middle ground.

At $450, the cymbals aren' t cheap. But what might you pay for a decent ride *and* a 20" crash?

MDM (for " medium," perhaps?) cymbals are the most " standard" of the lot, with the widest general application. They employ traditional lathing and hammering. The voice is clear, with a bright color. The DRK series features a mostly natural (" raw") finish, with light lathing lines out near the edge and deep hammering. They also have a lower profile than the others. As their acronym implies, these are the darkest-sounding of the TRX lines.

Back To The New Guys

Now, the question: How well does each new crash-ride model from the various lines function in crash and ride applications? With some minor reservations, my feeling is that they do a good job.

Ride patterns came through with lots of clarity, with only a moderate buildup underneath the stick patterns (much less than what you' d get when riding on a standard crash of the same size). The only concern I had was slightly reduced stick response due to the lighter weight of the cymbal as compared to a traditional ride. Soft riding was fine, with the underlying sound in control, but the stick tended to rebound less readily as I played harder and the cymbal started to wobble.

Crashing the cymbals resulted in full-bodied explosions of sound. (After all, these cymbals would qualify as pretty large, moderately thick crashes.) Drummers involved in punk, aggressive metal, and other intense styles would enjoy this, since they tend to ride on their crashes anyway. Jazz drummers and others in lower-volume situations would just need to be careful about keeping the crash response under control.

Conclusion

In terms of acoustic character, each of the TRX crash-rides was fiercely true to its model name and sonic description. Accordingly, punk or metal drummers might opt for the BRT or ALT models, while other players might lean toward the MDMs or DRKs.

Given the right model for the application, I could easily see going to a casual gig with just a TRX crash-ride and a set of hi-hats. Can you say, " lighter cymbal bag" ?

THE NUMBERS

20" BRT, ALT, MDM, and DRK crash-ride . . .$450
(818) 753-1310, www.trxcymbals.com

Tamburo ASH422AM Drumkit

<< Solid Sound, Professional Look

by Will Romano

KEY NOTES

- Lively, versatile snare
- Deep bass drum
- Warm wood finish
- Minor hardware problems

Italian drum manufacturer Tamburo has been making quality, handcrafted products since 1984, guided by the vision of founder Tullio Granatello. The company' s high-end Opera line, which features a unique form of stave construction, has impressed drummers across Europe and North America.

At the other end of the scale comes Tamburo' s latest offering: the ASH400 series. It' s intended to provide an affordable, durable, and professional-sounding alternative for a younger generation of drummers.

While acoustically similar to birch (providing a warm, controlled sound), ash has an even more attractive grain structure, which lends itself to stained finishes.

Construction

Some folks in the drum industry have speculated that ash is the "coming thing." Accordingly, ash drums are starting to show up on semi-pro and professional kits alike. Tamburo's ASH422AM kit consists of 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 toms, a $5^1/_2$x14 snare, and a 16x22 bass drum. The 6-ply ash shells come in a transparent amber matte satin finish. (Black and blue satin finishes are also available).

The drums come with chromed cylindrical tuning lugs fitted with ABS plastic anti-vibration washers, which Tamburo says absorb and eliminate unwanted ring. Swivel-action tension-rod receivers are used in order to keep unnecessary tension off the shell and to increase drum resonance. (More about this in a moment.)

Snare Drum

Our 14" review snare came equipped with a coated batter head and a thin, clear snare-side head. I spent considerable time tuning the heads, as well as adjusting the snare-holding strap for maximum effectiveness. The resulting sound was worth the effort. The drum's consistent, focused attack was sensitive at low volumes and punchy when I spanked the head with the butt end of my stick. I used no muffling, and I achieved a variety of voicings. Additionally, the user-friendly throw-off mechanism operated smoothly.

Toms

All of the toms were fitted with clear top heads and thin resonant heads. The 12x14 was a "floating floor tom," which I hung from the upper-middle section of the cymbal stand via a supplied double clamp and ball-joint tom arm. This high position allowed for easy playability. Everything was at a good striking distance. A supplied multiple-tom holder offered different setup combinations, including the option of mounting a fourth tom on the kit.

How did the toms sound? Very much like they *looked*. They had a deep, earthy texture, with a natural ring. The 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms were talkative and solid (without biting overtones), with a warm throatiness that I attributed to the acoustic character of the ash shells. I did have to tune the 12" and 14" toms carefully in order to ensure that the tonal drop between them was gradual as opposed to drastic. But overall, the three toms offered a nice sonic spread that never left me wanting more color.

Bass Drum

The bass drum produced a low-pitched pulse that wrapped around the attack of the beater on the head—a nice combination of thump and tone. Additionally, the acoustic character of the ash shells gave the sound a warm "woodiness." As promised by Tamburo when describing their ABS/chrome mounting system and anti-vibration washers, there seemed to be no interference with the drum's sound from the attached mounting hardware.

Hardware

Tamburo's 500 series is their no-frills line of stands. The package sent with our review kit came with only one cymbal stand—probably as a cost-controlling measure. Like the included snare stand, the cymbal stand was a pretty generic double-braced model. Both were serviceable, if unremarkable.

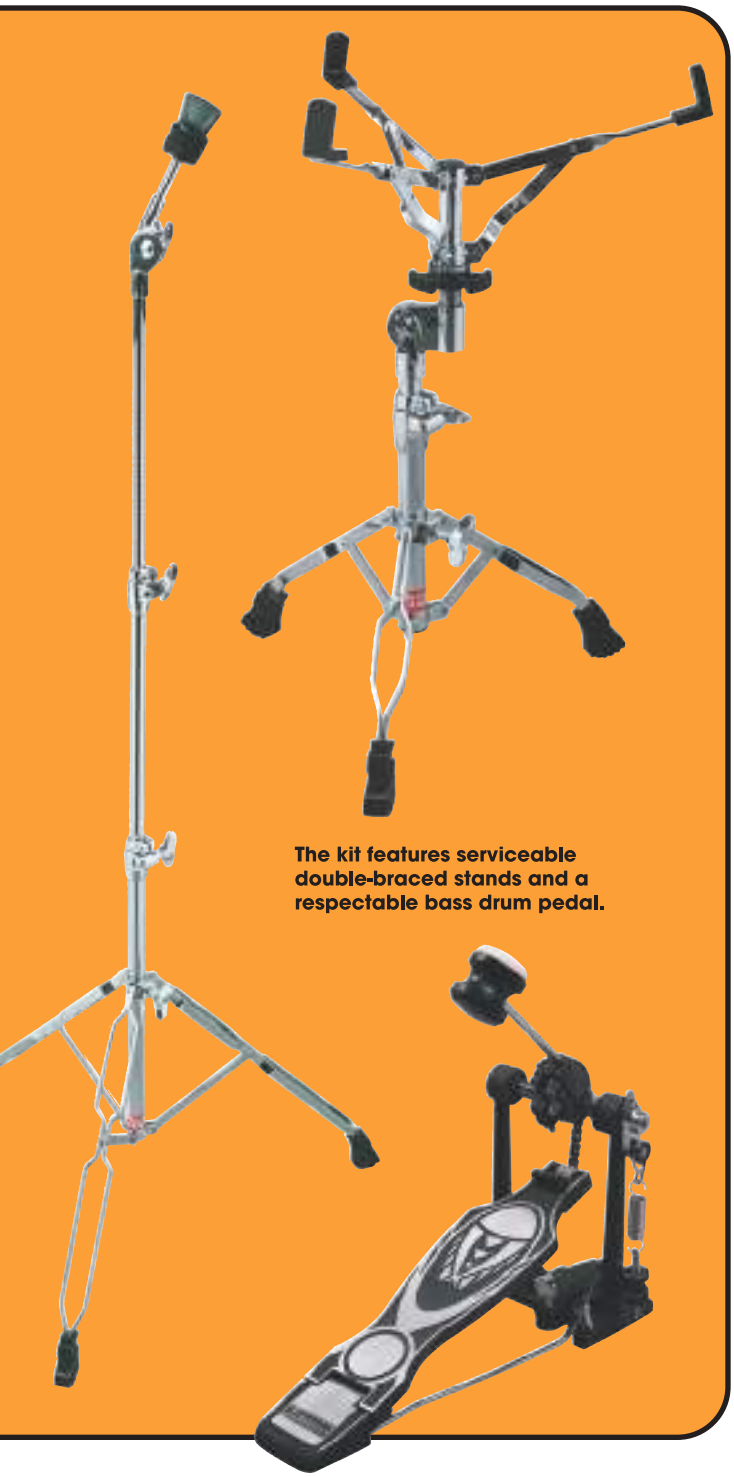
Tamburo's HHB500 hi-hat stand is heralded by the company as a practical and reliable piece of hardware. So I was surprised when the reinforcement rod beneath the foot pedal slipped out of its receiving holes in the base casting, an issue that I could not wholly correct.

The upper and lower sections of the hi-hat's pull rod are attached by a hinge, as opposed to being threaded together. Instead of

The ASH422AM tom mount uses a ball & socket/hex rod design for positioning flexibility.

separating the upper and lower sections of the hi-hat for pack up, you lift the upper tubing section out of the lower one just enough to fold it (and the top half of the pull rod inside it) over. This is a pretty convenient design.

In terms of playing action, the hi-hat initially felt a little stiff. My theory is that its non-adjustable spring (no frills, remember?) is a heavy-duty model designed to withstand the abuse of young stompers. In any event, when I installed hi-hat cymbals, the weight of the top cymbal pretty much eliminated the stiff feel. So there was no deterrent to my playing, whether I was applying sticks to the hats or just using my foot to keep time.



The kit features serviceable double-braced stands and a respectable bass drum pedal.

The Octopus series FP400 kick pedal is a lightweight, single-chain model fitted with a reversible felt/hard-plastic beater. The pedal's action was stiff when I first stepped on it, and the clamp didn't fit entirely onto the bass drum hoop. I had to spend some time finagling with the adjustments to rectify these problems. But once I got the pedal tweaked to my satisfaction, its performance proved quite respectable.

Conclusion

While minor problems with the hardware may have initially derailed me, my ultimate feeling about the ASH422AM kit is that it performed well above average—especially for its price. The sonic focus and aesthetic qualities of the ash shells make it particularly appealing. If Tamburo's intent is to market an acoustically sophisticated yet affordable kit, they've succeeded.

The HHB500 hi-hat features a hinged pull rod for convenient pack-up.

THE NUMBERS

Ash 422 drumkit $799.99
Includes 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, a 5½x14 snare drum, and a 16x22 bass drum. Hardware includes a hi-hat stand, a cymbal stand, a bass drum pedal, a universal clamp, a multi-purpose tom holder, and three single tom arms. Kits are available in the US only through selected independent retailers, which are listed on Tamburo's Web site.
www.tamburodrums.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

by Michael Dawson

Black chrome hardware and Brown Sugar Burst finish combine for a gorgeous look.

Thow-off is a bit clunky to operate.

42-strand snares make this drum hyper sensitive at all dynamic levels.

MAPEX BLACK PANTHER 6x13 DEEP FOREST WALNUT

HOW'S IT SOUND?

If I had to choose a single wood-shelled snare to use on most of my gigs, the Black Panther Deep Forest Walnut might be the one. I tested it in the studio and in the field, and found that it had just about everything I needed: sensitive response, a musical tone, and a wide dynamic range.

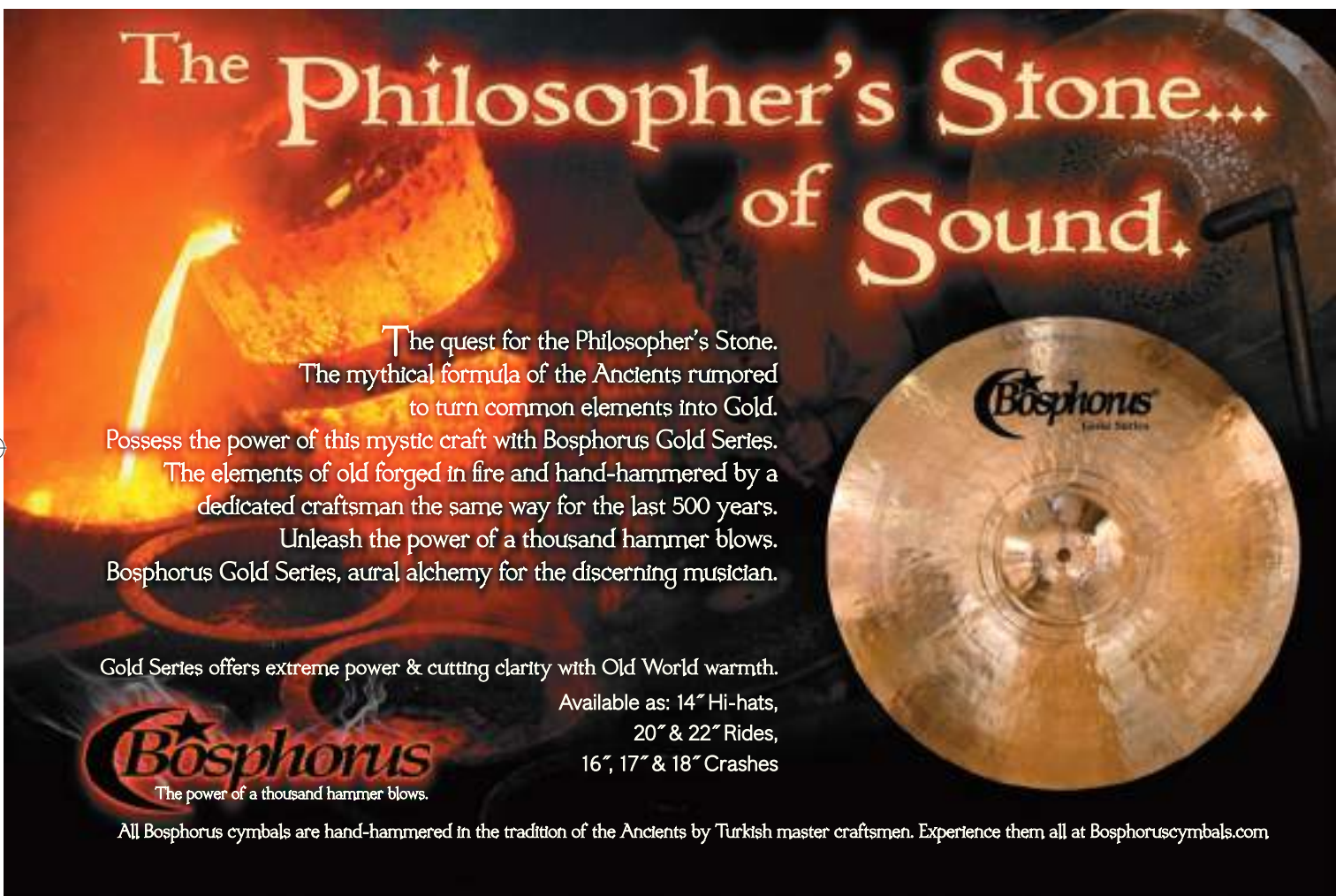
At several loud rock shows I had no problem hearing every stroke, even with the batter head tuned fairly loose. Then in a softer straight-ahead jazz setting, the walnut shell's dark tone shone through, while the 42-strand snares added a lot of presence to light 'comping patterns. The only time where you might want to reach for a different drum would be at quiet, acoustic-based gigs that involve a lot of brush playing. (Drums with 13" diameters are not quite big enough for swish patterns.)

At medium to loose tunings, the Deep Forest Walnut has a great midrange "crack" that would work well in most applications. You won't be able to get super fat Don Henley–style backbeats, but the pitch goes down far enough to achieve a punchy sound that's perfectly suited for the studio. This drum also shines in the upper register, where rimshots transform into thick, clear "pops" that would easily cut through the dense sounds of many contemporary styles.

WHAT'S IT COST? $533.99

www.mapexdrums.com

To hear this drum, log on to www.moderndrummer.com.



Akai MPC500

A Production Standard Goes Compact

by Michael Dawson

If there's one piece of gear that's a near necessity in hip-hop beat production, it's an Akai MPC. This legendary sampling/sequencing machine (designed by electronics wizard Roger Linn) has been a studio staple since it was introduced in 1988. For a great example of just how far you can go with one of these machines, check out DJ Shadow's groundbreaking 1996 release *Endtroducing*. Shadow put this entire record together on Akai's first-generation machine—the MPC60.

Now after nearly twenty years as an industry standard in the studio, Akai has introduced their first portable production center—the MPC500—which allows you to hone your beat-making skills while on the road. It also allows for easier application on the gig.

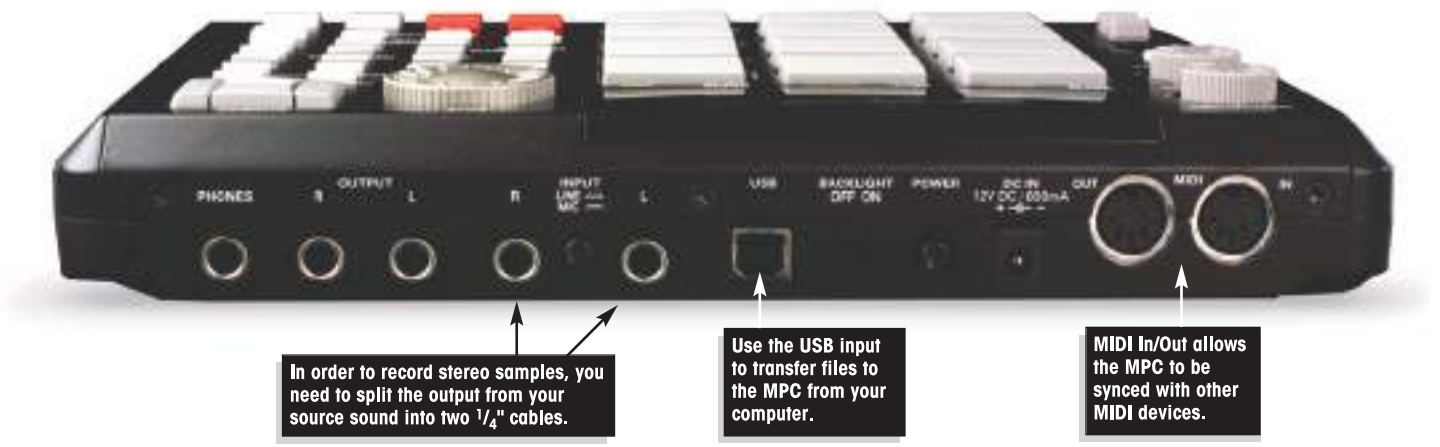
What's It Do?

Think of the MPC like any other drum machine / sequencer: Tap on a button and the sound module triggers a sample. Then record your ideas in real time or piece each phrase together step-by-step.

What distinguishes the MPC from a basic drum machine is its sampling capabilities. Other machines usually contain a finite

VITAL STATS

LIST PRICE: $1,099
SIZE: $10\frac{1}{2}$"x$6\frac{3}{4}$"x$1\frac{1}{2}$"
FILE STORAGE: 128-MB memory card
POWER SUPPLY: six AA batteries (not included) or 12-volt DC adapter (included)
INPUT: Two mono $\frac{1}{4}$" jacks (can be switched between mic and line levels)
OUTPUT: One $\frac{1}{4}$" stereo headphone jack and two $\frac{1}{4}$" mono outputs
www.akaipro.com



library of samples, but the MPC is designed so that you can create your own collection of sounds by sampling CDs, by recording directly into the internal memory with a microphone, or by uploading drum hits and loops (or whatever sounds you want) from a memory card or from your computer via a USB cable.

The Learning Curve

If you've spent any time programming drum machines or working with samplers, you shouldn't have too much trouble figuring out how to operate the MPC500. But if sampling, programming, and sequencing are new concepts for you, it would be in your best interest to work *slowly* through the manual so that you don't overlook some essential topics. For the first-time user, it can be a bit overwhelming.

Puttin' It To Use

The MPC500 comes preloaded with a few demo songs so that you can get a feel for how everything works. To listen to the demo, press the Play button. If you want to add your own part—like handclaps—find the pad that triggers that sample (Pad 8 of Bank A in the "Top Gun" demo), hold down the red Overdub button, and push Play-Start. Then tap on the pad to record your performance. When you're finished, press Stop and then press Play-Start to listen back. If you don't like what you hear, press Undo and try again.

As for recording samples onto the MPC500, first connect your sound source (CD player, turntable, iPod, or microphone) to the 1/4" inputs on the back of the machine. Then press the Mode button and Pad 4 to activate the sampler. From there, play your source and adjust the Record Gain knob until the input reaches a useable level. Then stop your source, press the Do It button, and restart. The sampler begins recording as soon as it receives a signal. When you're finished recording, press the Do It button again to stop the sampler. (You can record up to 41 seconds of a stereo sample or 1 minute and 22 seconds of a mono sound.) From there, assign the sample to one of the pads by either pressing the pad you want to use or by scrolling with the data wheel to the desired pad number.

In a perfect world, that's all you'd need to do to have your samples ready to go. But chances are the start and stop points aren't going to be perfect, so you have to go into Trim mode to clean up the beginning and ending of the sample. This is where I found the MPC500 to be a little difficult to work with. In the MPC, the start and end points of samples are represented by numbers. To adjust the beginning of the sample to a later time, you have to make the start number larger. To make the end of the sample occur earlier, the end point needs to be smaller.

The problem with this approach to editing is that it's educated guesswork: There's no way to know *exactly* where to place the start and stop points to have a perfectly trimmed sample. If you have experience editing audio waveforms in computer software, you'll probably find this process on the MPC500 a little frustrating. Fortunately, Akai has included a USB hook-up, which allows you to transfer files onto the sampler after you've trimmed them in Pro Tools or other programs.

Additional Features

Once you've recorded and trimmed your samples, and assigned them to different pads, you're well on your way to building beats. From there, you should save your samples to a new program so that you don't lose your work. Then you can start recording your ideas onto the MPC's internal sequencer.

As you're building sequences, you'll want to take advantage of some additional features within the MPC500, like Timing Correct. With this option, you can choose the smallest subdivision you want to use. Then the MPC adjusts your performance so that it lines up with the closest note within that subdivision. You can also impose a swing feel so that any offbeat rhythms are delayed between 50 and 75%.

Other features worth mentioning include the Full Level mode (which sets the dynamics of your performance to full volume), 12 Levels (which assigns one sample to all twelve pads, each at different dynamic levels), and Track Mute (which allows you to silence certain pad hits during playback). You can also assign the Q-Link slider to apply a sweeping low-pass filter to a track, or you can use it to raise/lower the sample's pitch or volume.

There are also several on-board effects that you can apply to your samples, like Bit Grunger (distortion), compression, and reverb. You can apply up to two effects to each sample and one master effect to your entire project.

What's In It For You?

As a drummer in the 21st century, it's very likely that at some point in your career you'll be asked to program a drum loop for an upcoming studio date or a live show. For that reason, it would be a good idea to get some experience with the concepts of sampling, looping, and sequencing, as well as with the most common tools that accomplish these tasks. Since the new MPC500 is much more compact and affordable than other machines in Akai's catalog, this could be a good place to start.

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I NEED MY DRUMS TO BE AS VERSATILE AS I AM.

The new Saturn Crossover 22 configuration
in the new Root Beer Burst Finish

BRADY BLADE | Dave Matthews and Friends

THAT'S WHY I PLAY MAPEX.

MAPEX

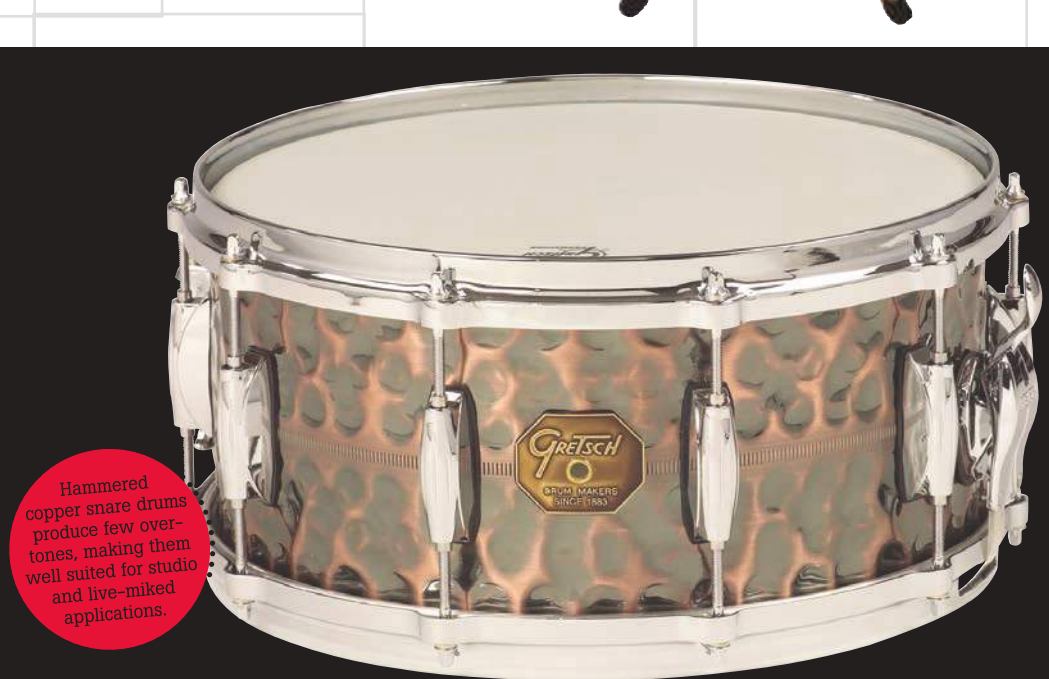
USA.MAPEXDRUMS.COM | WWW.MYSPACE.COM/MAPEXDRUMSUSA

Sabian' s mid-priced Xs20 cymbals combine 20% tin with 80% silver-bearing copper for durability and musicality.

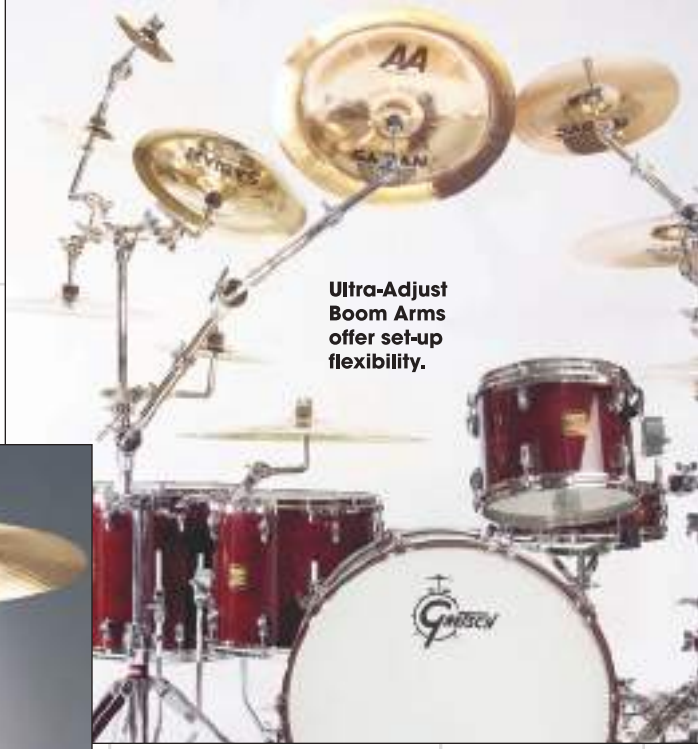
<< NEW LOOK FOR SABIAN

Sabian has given their mid-priced Xs20 series of B20 "cast" bronze cymbals an enhanced new look, with tonal grooves created by hand-cut lathing. With the addition of new branding, the result is said to be a more professional appearance. The cymbals are sold individually and in Sonically Matched sets, and feature Sabian's one-year warranty.

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com



Hammered copper snare drums produce few overtones, making them well suited for studio and live-miked applications.



Ultra-Adjust Boom Arms offer set-up flexibility.

Gibraltar's Ultra-Adjust Hi-Hat uses two gearless positioning points to provide up to 8" of displacement for the upper stand section.

<< GIBRALTAR ULTRA-ADJUST HI-HAT AND CYMBAL BOOM

Does fitting your hi-hat stand around your double pedal result in the hi-hat cymbals not being where you want them? Gibraltar's Ultra Adjust hi-hat stand allows you to place the stand in a comfortable playing location, and then to independently position the hi-hat cymbals. The stand is available with a moveable-leg tripod (9607ML-UA, $324.99) or with no legs at all (9607NL-UA, $274.99).

The same principle has been applied to Gibraltar's Ultra Adjust cymbal boom arm. A hideaway boom section attached to a 360° gearless mount provides infinite positioning and placement capabilities. Single (SC-USCB, $79.99) and Double (SC-UCB, $79.99) versions are available.

(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com

Catalina Maple kits feature maple formula shells with natural interiors, 2.5-mm triple-flanged hoops, Gretsch' s GTS suspension system, die-cast bass drum claw hooks, and Mini Gretsch lugs.

<< GRETSCH CATALINA MAPLE KIT (WITH FREE FLOOR TOM) AND NEW COPPER SNARES

A new Tobacco Fade Sunburst finish makes Gretsch's Catalina Maple semi-pro drumkit pretty attractive. But even more appealing is the fact that the Catalina Maple series includes a free 16x16 floor tom, making the list price for a six-piece kit (8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 6x14 snare drum) only $1,075.

For snare enthusiasts, Gretsch's Hammered Antique Copper Shell snare drums now come in 6x13 ($895) and $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 ($955) sizes. Each is said to be articulate, with a dry, dark voice that cuts with clarity, then quickly dissipates. Features include die-cast hoops, the Lightning throw-off, and 42-strand snare wires.

(860) 509-8888, www.gretschdrums.com

<< BUDDY RICH SIGNATURE AND HEADLINER KITS

The Buddy Rich Signature kit features 100% maple drums in ply configurations tailored to deliver the best tone, projection, and resonance: 14x24 bass drum and two 16x16 floor toms (7 ply), a 9x13 rack tom (6 ply), and a 5x14 snare drum (10 ply). The kit's Beaver Tail lugs, Rail Consolette tom mount, and shell-mounted ride and splash cymbal holders are vintage in design, but are manufactured to meet the demands of today's drummer. A high-density White Marine Pearl finish rounds out the kit's authentic features. List price is $2,249.

At the entry level, Headliner kits include a 9x13 rack tom, 12x14 and 16x16 floor toms, a 16x22 bass drum, and a 5x14 snare drum—all with high-density poplar shells covered with a gloss black wrap finish. Heavy-duty hardware includes a ball-style tom mount with memory locks, Beaver Tail–style lugs, triple-flanged hoops, and telescoping bass drum spurs. List price is $1,165.

(617) 633-2346,
www.buddyrichdrumcompany.com

The Buddy Rich Signature kit is designed after its namesake's personal specifications.

The Buddy Rich Headliner lets beginning drummers start on a drumset bearing the name of one of history's most famous drummers.

Modulator Tubes vary the volume and tone of the Modular drum depending on the length and air flow through the tube.

<< REMO MODULAR DRUM

Remo's Modular drum can be used to produce the authentic fundamental sounds of a conga, doumbek, darbuka, Hira Daiko, or other ethnic drum, by switching Modulator Tubes within the drum. The tubes thread directly onto the drum with a simple twist. The drum features an Acousticon shell, a recessed tuning system, and a synthetic Skyndeep calfskin-graphic drumhead for warm bass and bright slap tones.

The Modular Drum Kit comes complete with the $5^1/_2$x10 drum, three Modulator tubes ($4^1/_2$x6, $4^1/_2$x8, and $4^1/_2$x14), muffle foam for quiet practice, a disk plate, a custom carrying bag, and a tuning key. List price is $524.

(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com

<< PAISTE 24" RUDE MEGA POWER RIDE

Paiste has collaborated with System Of A Down's John Dolmayan to create the 24" Rude Mega Power Ride. It features a solid, penetrating stick sound, a roaring yet controllable wash, and a huge bell sound that's well separated from the overall cymbal sound. As a tribute to John's collaborative efforts, the label "The Eclipse" (John's own name for the new ride) appears on each cymbal in conjunction with the model designation.

A limited edition of the new ride bearing the signatures of John Dolmayan and Erik Paiste will be issued throughout 2007. Each cymbal will be accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. A portion of the proceeds from this limited edition will be contributed to a charitable cause.

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com

<< MAPEX SATURN SERIES ADD-ON PACK

Mapex's Saturn Plus Bass 24 Add-On Pack includes a mammoth 20x24 bass drum, a 9x10 suspended tom, a 16x18 floor tom, a P750A bass drum pedal, a TS960A combo tom/cymbal stand, and an AC906 multi-clamp for attaching a hi-hat stand to a kick drum. The pack is sold specifically as an add-on to the Saturn Plus Bass Rock 24 kit configuration, but can be combined with any matching Saturn kit.

Saturn Series drums feature extra-thin 5.1-mm shells that are constructed from four exterior maple plies and two interior plies of walnut. The walnut gives the drum a warm, rich tone and excellent tuning range. List price for the Add-On Pack is $2,142.99.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapex.com

The Saturn Plus Bass 24 Add-On Pack from Mapex lets drummers expand their current setup into an arena rock–sized double-kick configuration.

<< PRO-MARK STICK QUINTET

Pro-Mark has added five new American hickory models to its Autograph drumstick series. The TXSD9W, designed for Teddy Campbell of *American Idol* fame, features an oval-shaped wood tip. At $16\frac{1}{4}$" long and .610" in diameter, it's said to be a relatively large stick with the response of a smaller one. The TX718LW, made for Terreon Gully (Stefon Harris), is $16\frac{1}{2}$" long and .551" in diameter, with a modified ball-shaped wood tip. This is a versatile 5A-diameter stick.

For Ronald Bruner Jr. (Stanley Clarke, Kenny Garrett, Suicidal Tendencies), the TX818W is 16" long and .560" in diameter. It has a relatively short taper for extra power, plus a small acorn tip for articulation on drums and cymbals. Abe Cunningham (Deftones) plays the TX916W, which is $16\frac{5}{8}$" long and .620" in diameter. With an oval-shaped wood tip, this one's built for power.

The fifth new Autograph stick honors Pro-Mark founder Herb Brochstein, on the occasion of the company's 50th anniversary. The Herb Brochstein TXHBW is 16" long and .551" in diameter, like a Pro-Mark 5A. It features an acorn-shaped wood tip. List price for all five models is $12.95.

(877) 776-6275, www.promark.com

<< BOSPHORUS GOLD POWER PACK

Bosphorus Gold series cymbals are now available as a sonically matched set called the Gold Series Power Pack. These hand-hammered cymbals are made in the ancient Turkish tradition, and are fully polished to a high luster. They provide extreme cutting power, volume, and durability while maintaining Old World warmth and tone. List price is $1,080.

(678) 354-1060, www.bosphoruscymbals.com

<< KOTZ PERCUSSION CAJON GAJATE

The Cajon Gajate is built for the road, using European birch, key-lock joinery, and top-quality components. Heavy-duty hardware includes bolts and threaded inserts throughout, tuning machines that don't require special tools or wrenches, and proprietary low-tension strings.

Unlike traditional string cajons, which tend to have a lot of snare sound present within the bass tones, the Cajon Gajate features deep bass and crisp snare tones that are distinct and separate. It's available for $465.

(909) 981-3959, www.tonecajon.com

Designer Michael Kotzen spent eight months creating a signature cajon that meets the needs and standards of top session and touring percussionist Richie " Gajate" Garcia.

Chrome Over Brass

<< AHEAD SNARE DRUM EXPANSION

Following the success of their Black On Brass snare introduction, Ahead has added three new models to its line. The Steam-Bent Maple model features a single-ply 100% maple shell, and lists for $899. The Chrome Over Brass model has a lightweight tube-lug design, and lists for $419. The Wenge Vert model has a thin shell constructed of vertical staves of this rare West African wood, which is harder than maple. It lists for $899.

All three snares come fitted with S-Hoop drum hoops, Tight Screw tension rods, Fat Cat snappy snares, and Dunnett R Class throw-offs.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com

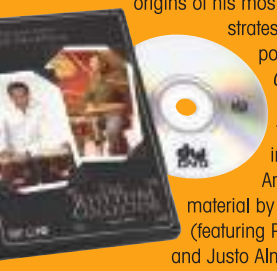
Steam-Bent Maple

Wenge Vert

The Reference Shelf

The Rhythm Collector (DVD)

by Alex Acuña (Drum Workshop)



In this cinematically inspired DVD, Acuña explains the origins of his most cherished rhythms, and demonstrates how they apply to drumset and popular music. *The Rhythm Collector* is also filled with personal stories and biographical details that are entertaining and inspiring.

Among the many performances is material by Alex's original jazz project Canela (featuring Patrice Rushen, Abraham Laboriel, and Justo Almario). There's also a high-energy live rock show with Latin alternative superstars Kinky, as well as some of Alex's favorite percussionists and musicians assisting him to perform the rhythms he's collected over a lifetime.

The DVD was filmed in high-definition and captured in digital multi-track sound. Special features include a photo gallery, a backstage look at the making of the movie, and bonus performance footage. List price is $39.95.

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com

Natural Drumming, Lessons 5 & 6 (DVD)

by Joe Morello & Danny Gottlieb (Mel Bay)

This installment of the Morello/Gottlieb Natural Drumming series continues to focus on Morello's technical approach, which promotes natural body movement without tension. Lesson 5 illustrates basic arm movements, along with Morello's interpretation of the Moeller technique. Lesson 6 combines all the strokes from the previous lessons, and includes finger exercises. Morello also demonstrates some of the exercises found in his Master Studies book. In addition, the DVD features appearances by percussionist/educator Beth Gottlieb and performer/educator Mike Malgoza. List price is $24.95.

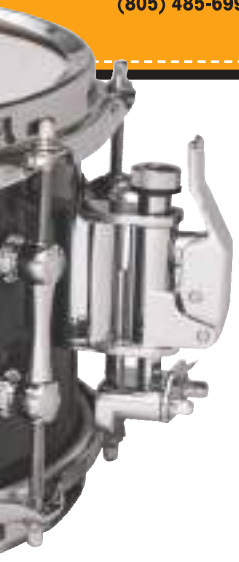
(636) 257-3970, www.melbay.com

Heads Up: An Extraordinary Drumming Event (DVD)

Various Artists (Altitude Digital Productions)

This DVD documents performances from the 2006 Drummers For Jesus event held in Dallas, Texas. Featured drummers include Gregg Bissonette, Gerald Heyward, John Blackwell Jr., Nathaniel Townsley, Sean McCurley, Louis Santiago Jr., Bill Bachman, C.G. Ryche, Andrew Lloyd, Christopher Coleman, and Derek Winkley. The drummers perform in solo spots, in multiple-drummer acts, and with a complete back-up band. List price is $29.95.

www.altitudedigital.com



<< AND WHAT'S MORE >>

BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION has made an addition to the Drum O's line of plastic snap-in drumhead hole reinforcements. Available now is a 6" oval-shaped Drum O, offered in eight colors. List price is $21.95.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com

AQUARIAN has released their first color catalog. In addition to a complete listing of the manufacturer's products, the catalog features a brief history of founders Roy Burns and Ron Marquez in the years leading to the formation of Aquarian. Also highlighted are the company's early accomplishments, as well as current successful innovations.

(714) 632-0230, www.aquariandrumheads.com

AHEAD's new 5AB Hybrid synthetic drumsticks blend a 5B handle (for easy grip) with a 5A taper (for quick rebound). Two lengths are available: the 5ABS Studio Hybrid (16") and the 5ABC Concert Hybrid (16¼"). The sticks list for $33.99 per pair.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com

PRO-MARK now offers unique drummer gloves in its accessories line. Features include thin-cut Cabretta leather, eight specially placed pads on the four fingers and three on the palm for improved grip, extra padding on the thumbprint area, fingertips, and knuckles to slow down the wear-through process, breathable mesh on top to reduce perspiration, a closing strap that does not interfere with wrist motion, and "pre-rotated" fingers to help promote natural closure of the hand. The gloves can be washed with warm water and a mild detergent, then air dried. They're available in four sizes, at $69.95 per pair.

(877) 776-6275, www.promark.com

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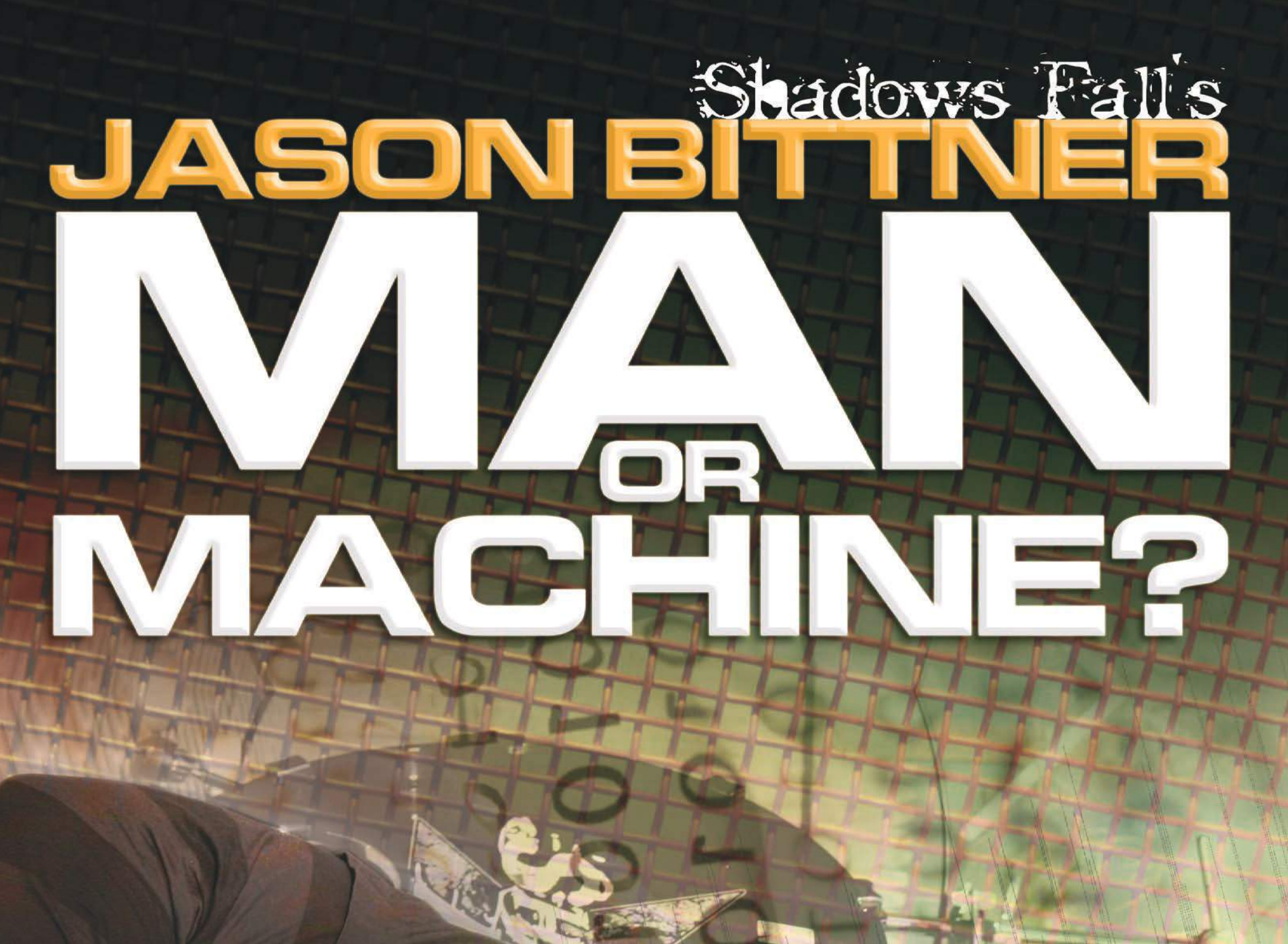
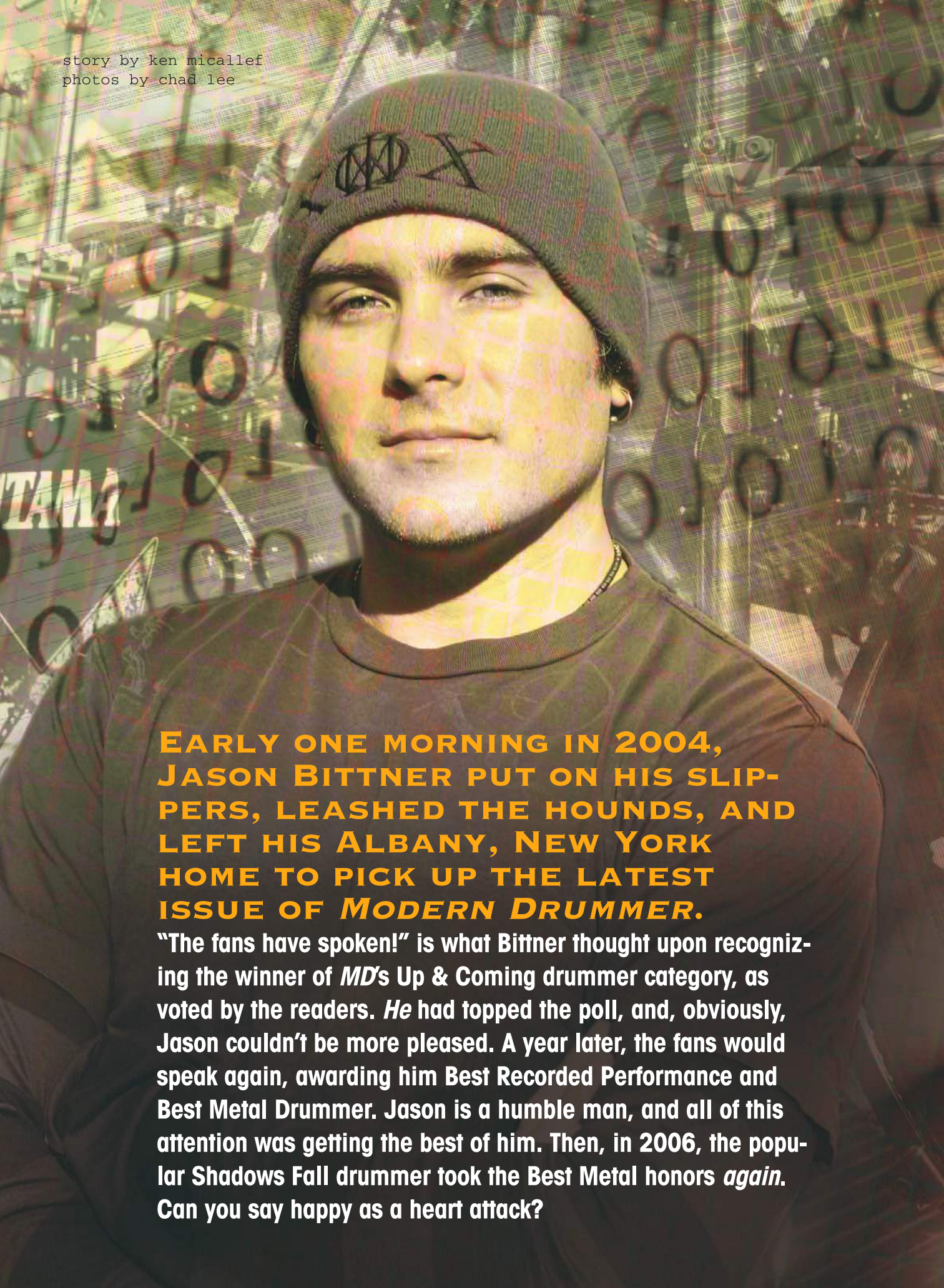
Shadows Fall's

JASON BITTNER

MAN OR MACHINE?



story by ken micallef
photos by chad lee



Early one morning in 2004, Jason Bittner put on his slippers, leashed the hounds, and left his Albany, New York home to pick up the latest issue of *Modern Drummer*.

"The fans have spoken!" is what Bittner thought upon recognizing the winner of *MD*'s Up & Coming drummer category, as voted by the readers. *He* had topped the poll, and, obviously, Jason couldn't be more pleased. A year later, the fans would speak again, awarding him Best Recorded Performance and Best Metal Drummer. Jason is a humble man, and all of this attention was getting the best of him. Then, in 2006, the popular Shadows Fall drummer took the Best Metal honors *again*. Can you say happy as a heart attack?

"I've been fortunate to become respected in the drum community, which is really flattering," Bittner says, recalling his poll-topping status. "The readers poll is something that I hold dear. And with it comes a level of introspection, wondering just what I've done to make these kids enjoy what I do. It also adds a lot of pressure. I felt that I really had to step it up for our next album."

The answer to Jason Bittner's introspection, gratitude, and determination is *Threads Of Life*, the new Shadows Fall album, their major-label debut. Following such impressive efforts as *The Art Of Balance, The War Within,* and *Fallout From The War*, Shadows Fall's latest shows the nu-metal genre coming of age. The band has broadened their scope without sacrificing essential ingredients like speed, power, profundity, and some truly incredibly drumming.

A former computer operator and left-handed drummer who plays a righty kit, Jason Bittner is living the dream. He hangs out with Charlie Benante, Mike Portnoy, and comedian Andrew "Dice" Clay. He's a busy clinician, and when he has time he teaches privately to students enamored of his machine-gun, double-bass attack, two-handed ride cymbal approach, and four-stroke-ruff drum tattoos. And most importantly, he's a member of one of the fastest-rising bands in the world.

Beyond typical nu-metal essentials like "Terminator" double bass drums, alien aggression beats, and head-rattling tempos, Bittner understands the power of the pulse. His work on *Threads Of Life* is a lesson in metal groove, two words that once bordered on the oxymoronic. A trained drummer who studied jazz and Latin at Boston's Berklee College of Music in 1988 (and who played in jazz and marching bands in high school), Bittner brings a sense of humanity and soul to Shadows Fall's carnivorous metal mayhem, referencing his heroes—Stewart Copeland, Charlie Benante, and Gene Hoglan—to give life to music that is sometimes the antithesis of simple heartwarming sustenance. But make no mistake, Bittner still blasts.

As seen in *MD*'s *Festival 2005* DVD, Jason Bittner plays so much drums it's hard to know where to begin. His double bass drumming is revered to the point that some have claimed it's all a machine. His double-handed riding technique, along with his penchant for splash cymbals and titanic four-stroke ruffs, makes his metal palatable for prog rock and jazz lovers alike. But Bittner, a veteran whose stints with Stigmata and Burning Human have made him as much an object of affection as derision (on some Internet chat rooms), doesn't stop at playing in Shadows Fall. This year the drummer releases his first book, a hardcore CD with Burning Human, and a double drumming appearance on Mike Portnoy's new DVD, *In Constant Motion*.

Speaking from his home in Albany, New York, the thirty-something drummer is grateful to be recognized for his contributions to the art. Responding to questions while tidying up his practice space for a lesson with Andrew Dice Clay, his love of drumming and music is obvious. The vagaries of heavy metal stardom may rise and fall, but thanks to the readers of *MD*, Jason Bittner's head is perpetually in the clouds.

MD: The new Shadows Fall album, *Threads Of Life*, shows musical growth for the band, and your drumming is more fluid and in command than ever. What prompted the growth spurt on both counts?

Jason: I am very skeptical about my playing. I'm always wondering, "Is this good enough? Can I top that? Will the fans like it?" I'm constantly driving myself crazy with it. I was really confused with what I wanted to do with my drumming on this album.

The Art Of Balance [2003] got me some exposure. On *The War Within* I was more comfortable and the guys were writing songs tailored to my drumming. I calculated my parts to where I had the fills memorized. I played everything but the kitchen sink on *Fallout From The War*—that became my drum album. I played my fastest double bass yet. So I wondered, "What am I going to do to make *Threads* different?"

We wanted to bring in more melody and concentrate more on the songs. It wasn't me thinking about playing faster double bass to top the last album. The fastest song is 195 bpm, which isn't my fastest. But I think my drumming is more professional. Our producer, Nick Raskulinecz [Foo Fighters, Rush, Velvet Revolver], asked me to think more about the songs, not the drum parts. And that's how I improved; I took a step back and thought, How are the drums going to sit in this song?

MD: So you played less?

Jason: There are still fills and little splash accents. But Nick encouraged me to play less so that when the busier parts kicked in, they might have more impact. In the past we were so locked into time and budget constraints that I tracked everything to a click and a scratch guitar track, with no one there but the producer. But this time we had the luxury of being all together in the studio to adjust our parts accordingly.

MD: How did having a producer who wanted you to simplify affect your drumming in general?

Jason: I didn't simplify. We're talking about leaving out a few little splash hits. Nick said, "We know you can do this and that, but do you need to do it all in every song?" The egotistical drummer in me said, "Of course, I have to play that in every single song." Then Nick brought up Neil Peart, who can play anything, but doesn't do it in every song. So we concentrated on those special drumming moments.

JASON'S CURRENT KIT

Drums: Tama Starclassic Performer Birch with black gloss finish and black chrome hardware. (Tama is building a new kit for Jason for his upcoming tour, with bubinga/birch shells and a custom finish, same sizes as follows.)

A. 18" floor tom (or 20" gong drum)
B. 6½x14 bell brass snare (5" on occasion)
C. 9x10 tom
D. 10x12 tom
E. 12x14 tom
F. 14x16 tom
G. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Meinl

1. 8" Byzance dark splash
2. 10" Raker splash
3. 14" MB10 medium Soundwave hi-hat
4. 20" MB20 Custom Big Bell heavy ride
5. 17" MB10 medium crash
6. 18" Byzance China (brilliant)
7. 18" MB10 medium crash
8. 8" MB10 splash (or Raker splash)
9. 19" MB10 medium crash
10. 20" MB10 Jason Bittner Bell Blast ride
11. 17" MB20 heavy crash
12. 18" MB20 Rock China
13. 8" custom bell (not in photo)
14. 13" Custom MB10 medium Soundwave hi-hat
15. 16" Byzance China (brilliant)
16. 16" MB10 medium crash

Electronics: Roland

aa. trigger pads (positioned where Octobans are in photo)

Hardware: Tama, including Iron Cobra Rolling Glide HP900R pedals and a curved rack
Heads: Evans Power Center reverse dot on snare, clear G2s on tops of toms, clear G1s on bottoms, EQ3 on kick batters with Headfirst logo heads on front
Sticks: Pro-Mark 5BX Jason Bittner signature
Miscellaneous: Ahead gloves, Puresound snare wires, XL cases, Calzone road cases

Threads & Tracks

MD: On Shadows Fall records, are we ever hearing a live track, or is everything overdubbed?

Jason: On this record, "Fade Into Smoke" was recorded as an entire band in a live setting—no click or anything. It became a B side. It was a song that gradually slowed down every thirty seconds. We tried to program a click to do that but it sounded so sterile. It had to be felt.

MD: Does recording parts separately make for a more precise track?

Jason: It gives us more precision and lets us concentrate on individual performances. I've been doing it with the click for so long, even with Stigmata, that I've found I work better like that. If I can go in and record alone with a click and don't need anybody else there, that means I don't have to inconvenience anyone else. I'm responsible for myself and that's it.

MD: And you've already rehearsed the songs by that point?

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Jason: Exactly. For *The War Within*, I had the drums so mapped out that I just went in, set up the click, sang the song in my head, put the part down, and that was it. A lot of those songs were complete performances, or maybe I hit a fill better in the first take than the third, so we pasted in the fill from the better track.

MD: Your bass drums sound like machines, but your feel with the click is what separates you from the pack. On several songs from *Threads Of Life* I can hear you slowing down or moving within the tempo of the click.

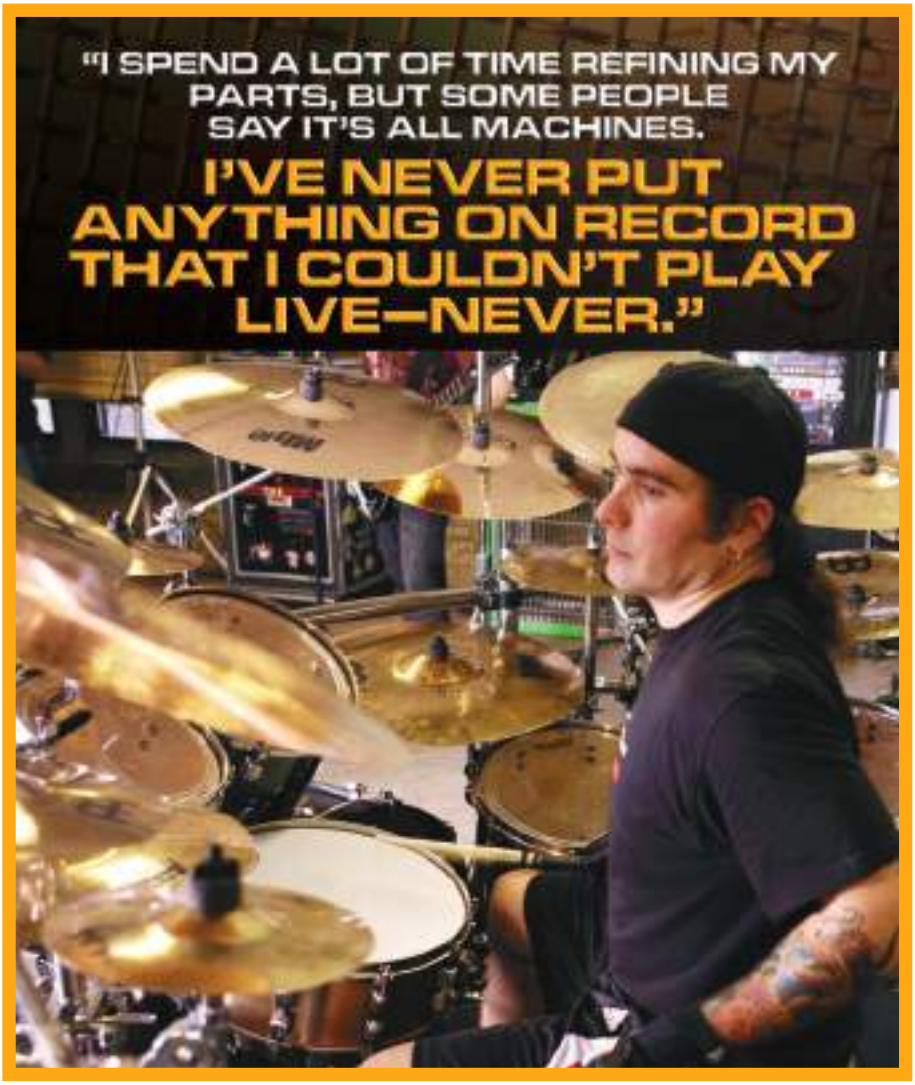
Jason: That's something I pride myself on. That's how I practiced and learned my double bass skills at Berklee. The click is your friend if you know how to work with it. But in this genre of music it can take away from the feel. You can hear how I fluctuate with the click, and that's a good thing. It's still in time, but it shows that I'm also human. You can hear that I was rocking it on this album, and though I was recording with a click, Nick had the band play everything and I played along to their tracks. That gave it a better feel.

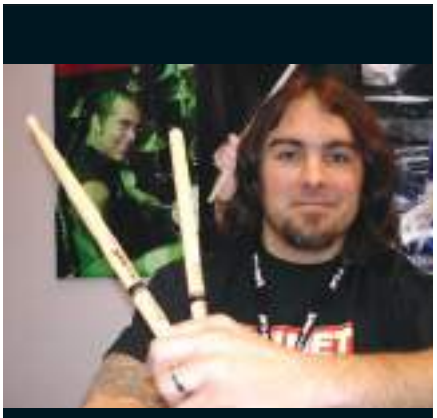
MD: Much of the nu-metal genre lacks feel in the groove. It's one big battering ram.

Jason: And I've been accused of that on Web forums. People say, "It sounds too mechanical, he can't be playing that part." Well, I don't consider myself to be the best drummer in metal. I consider myself to be the best drummer I can be for my band. There are tons of guys who play faster than me and who play more intricately than I do. I just try to do the best job for my situation.

MD: It's lonely at the top.

Jason: As drummers, we sometimes become prisoners of our drum parts. You try to do a good job. I spend a lot of time refining my parts to come up with a great performance. But some people just want to tear you down by saying it's all machines. I've never put anything on record that I couldn't play live—*never*. I bust my butt, and some people don't believe I played it! I approach every song with the idea that it will be played live, so if I can't play it a hundred fifty times in the next six months, I'd better not record it.





JASON BITTNER
Shadows Fall
Jason Bittner Autograph Model
American Hickory, TX5BX, Nylon-tip

ABE CUNNINGHAM
Deftones
Abe Cunningham Autograph Model
American Hickory, TX916, Wood-tip

DON BREWER
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American Hickory,
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JASON BITTNER

Drum Nation Star

MD: Is "March Of The Bittner," on Drum Nation, Vol. your own composition?

Jason: I recorded that with my buddies Joe Joyce [bass] and Kevin Maloney [guitar], who play in Of Old, a progressive metal band. We recorded that initially as a demo in 2001, before I joined Shadows Fall. Pete Morticelli at Magna Carta contacted me about Drum Nation, Vol. He wanted a track with a solo break or a drum vamp. I knew the track with Of Old was the perfect vehicle. You can hear the mistakes all over it.

I did the whole thing with a click. But in the end, when the band vamps over the six feel, it's just me going for it. The riff has a turnaround, so I had to be aware of that. There wasn't a lot of opportunity to punch in that section. There's only one punch during those two minutes of soloing.

MD: In one part you're playing an open hi-hat with your foot, something you haven't done before.

Jason: I learned that from Larry Levine. It's called "six with your sticks." It's just this triplet hi-hat/tom pattern. I kept it in my bag of tricks.

MD: Did you write a chart for the track?

Jason: On my gong bass I wrote out a chart of the ideas that I wanted to play in the solo. But when you listen to it, you'll notice that I revisit things that I played earlier in the solo, because I was waiting for the riff to come back around. It's an off-the-cuff thing; I almost think I soloed for too long.

MD: I disagree. So much in the nu-metal genre is formulaic and rigid. It's good to hear someone cut loose. It was closer to the MD Festival 2005 performance.

Jason: I played some of the same ideas on that as I did on the Festival performance. We recorded the track two blocks away from my

ATTACK OF THE KILLER "Bs"

BENANTE ON BITTNER

When it came to hiring a sub for Anthrax's 2006 reunion tour, Charlie Benante thought of only one drummer: Jason Bittner. "Anthrax was touring at the same time my wife was expecting a baby," Charlie says. "I was on my way to Denver for our last two shows, and I got the call at 8:30 in the morning: 'It's happening!' I ran straight to the airport, racking my brain as to who could fill in for me on the last shows of the tour. I thought of Jason, contacted him, and he said he could do it, no problem.

"When I called Jason," Charlie continues, "He said, 'I've been waiting for this call!' He knew my wife was due and that we were on tour. Jason said he had a feeling that I might be calling him. He rehearsed with the band, and they told me he wanted to do all the old songs. I just told Jason about certain cues, although he had seen us play before so he knew the cues. He did great.

"In general, to play with Anthrax, a drummer needs to pace himself, which is one thing Jason noticed," Benante reveals. "He said he was dead after a couple of songs in. You need to pace yourself, especially on songs like 'A Skeleton In The Closet' and 'Among The Living,' which have a lot of fast double kick.

"Jason has been a fan from way back and he knew some of these songs better than I do," Charlie admits. "I felt he would be right for the gig. He could pull it off better than anyone. Also, we've gotten to know each other over the years. I always felt that he was destined to do big things. Plus he's always been a good guy. Jason is one of those people who doesn't hold back about who he loves. He's really upfront, and I like that. It's flattering. He also makes me laugh. And, yeah, he's an *awesome* drummer."

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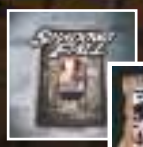
Artist	Album
Shadows Fall	Threads Of Life
Shadows Fall	The War Within
Shadows Fall	Fallout From The War
Shadows Fall	The Art Of Balance
Shadows Fall	The Art Of Touring (DVD)
various artists	Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005 (DVD)
Jason Bittner/Chris Adler	Adler/Bittner At MD Fest 2005 (DVD)
Various Artists	Drum Nation, Vol. 3
Various Artists	Within The Mind (A Tribute To Chuck Shuldiner And Death)
Stigmata	Hymns For An Unknown God
Stigmata	Do Unto Others
Stigmata	Pain Has No Boundaries



His Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
KISS	Alive	Peter Criss
The Who	Who's Next	Keith Moon
The Police	Ghost In The Machine	Stewart Copeland
Rush	all	Neil Peart
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Cream	Disraeli Gears	Ginger Baker
Iron Maiden	Number Of The Beast	Clive Burr
Iron Maiden	Piece Of Mind	Nicko McBrain
Missing Persons	Spring Session M	Terry Bozzio
Metallica	Ride The Lightning	Lars Ulrich
Anthrax	Among The Living	Charlie Benante
Slayer	Reign In Blood	Dave Lombardo
Fates Warning	Parallels	Mark Zonder
Pantera	Vulgar Display Of Power	Vinnie Paul
Cynic	Focus	Sean Reinhert
Death	Symbolic	Gene Hoglan
Slayer	Divine Intervention	Paul Bostaph
Morbid Angel	Domination	Pete Sandoval
Dream Theater	Scenes From A Memory	Mike Portnoy
Slipknot	Iowa	Joey Jordison

Plus anything by Buddy Rich, Steve Smith, Thomas Lang, Billy Cobham, Simon Phillips, Gavin Harrison, Shannon Larkin, Kelly David Smith, Richard Christy, Ed Warby, Mikkey Dee, Nick Barker, Derek Roddy, and Flo Mounier.

house, where I will be recording an album with my old death metal band, Burning Human. People ask why I don' t play blast beats, but I' m more of a hard rock / heavy metal drummer. I' m not a death, black metal, or blast beat drummer. I' m not as fast as guys like Nick Barker or Flo Mounier.

I knew after recording the Shadows record that I wanted to do something more extreme, where no one could tell me what to do. That' s where Burning Human comes in. We went into the studio for fun and re-recorded some old songs and wrote some new ones. It was a totally fun thing.

MD: What was your role on Mike Portnoy' s new DVD, In Constant Motion?

Jason: Mike was gracious enough to bring me onstage during the last Dream Theater tour, when they came to Hartford. He does double drum solos on tour, so he agreed to have me do one with him. We threw together a skeleton solo based on what he and Charlie Benante had done a few weeks prior–just trading fours and playing famous drum parts from songs by Aerosmith, Van Halen, and Metallica. I played part of a Dream Theater song with their guitarist, John Petrucci, and then Mike and I traded fours again. That was a cool experience.

MD: What was the goal of your new book, Drumming Out Of The Shadows: The Drumming Of Jason Bittner And Shadows Fall?

Jason: It' s a transcription book based on the War Within CD, as well as three songs from Fallout From The War and The Art of Balance, all transcribed by MD contributor Joe Bergamini and one of his students, Willie Rose.

It includes a play-along CD for the War Within album, minus the drums. It' s the same CD I play along to at my clinics. And it contains the entire " Double Bass Crash Course" article series that I wrote for MD.

MD: What do you focus on in your clinics and, by extension, in your teaching?

Jason: The first thing people ask me about is double bass, but I try to integrate some other aspects. You can' t just play double bass. You have to work on rudiments, Stick Control, and Syncopation, and start thinking outside of metal or rock.

In clinics, I concentrate on double bass, but I also try to get across the idea that it doesn' t matter what kind of music you like to play, you should be open to as many styles of music as possible. At Berklee I learned how to play Latin and jazz, and that opened my mind. If someone says, " Play samba or swing," I can do it because I worked on it.

In my clinics, I do something called " Metal-fying." When I metal-fy something, I' ll find a way to mesh one style with another. You put the click on, play a double kick samba pattern, for example, then immediately follow it with a double bass rock pattern, both within the same groove. Maybe you' re accenting the snare the same way over both rhythms. It' s a challenge to bring two styles together and to move between the two. I' ll do that with reggae and slow blues, as well as with swing patterns and blast beats. Then you' re really practicing two different things.

Technique Therapy

MD: Most fans focus on your technique, but what separates you from the pack is your musicality. Your drumming isthe song, per se. How did you develop that sense of metal musicality?

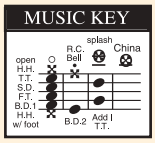
Jason: I play guitar and I have a little knowledge of songwriting. I always think of the drum part being in tune with the guitar part. With Shadows Fall, [guitarists] Matt [Bachand] and Jon [Donais] will come up with ideas for drum parts, and I' ll make those my own by adding something if it needs it. But I think about not stepping on other people' s toes, too.

I was just reading an article about Keith Moon, and Roger Daltrey said Moon would frame the vocals with his fills. He would be very cognizant of what was happening in the song, but still go for that bombast when the time was right. That' s how I try to approach my

Continued on page 66

Jason Bittner
Style & Analysis

by Joe Bergamini



Jason Bittner's extreme speed and stamina, along with the creativity and intelligence of his parts, sets him apart from many other heavy metal drummers. He's also a true drumming enthusiast who takes inspiration from his heroes and transforms it into his own brand of exciting and musical drumming. As we take a look at some of Jason's parts, we'll identify some of his sources as well as his own signature concepts.

"The Light That Blinds," *The War Within*

On this track, Jason is featured in a drum break. He calls this his "Tom Sawyer" part, referring to the famous drum fills in the classic Rush song. The descending tom patterns with broken rhythms are reminiscent of Rush's Neil Peart and Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy, while the double bass and cymbal combinations are influenced by MD Hall Of Famer Terry Bozzio. As is always the case in Jason's playing, the cymbal voices are carefully chosen. Notice the China and splash sounds in the fifth bar and the splash/ride cymbal combination at the end of the break. (3:14)

"The Power Of I And I," *The War Within*

Jason is heavily influenced by bands such as Slayer, Anthrax, and Metallica. And the double ride pattern of this aggressive opening passage is inspired by Gene Hoglan of Strapping Young Lad. But the use of the China to accent the ends of the phrases is another one of Jason's trademarks. (0:00)

"In Effigy," *Fallout From The War*

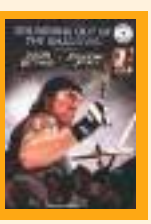
Jason can shift cleanly and accurately between different rhythms with his feet, and here's a great example of that. This drum part is very aggressive-sounding yet intricate. Jason's placement of broken double bass patterns always adds interest to his parts. (1:24)

Later in the song the intro section returns, featuring a paradiddle figure that's extremely tough to play cleanly at this tempo. Note in bars 7 and 8 the Mike Portnoy / Simon Phillips tom/kick combination that leads into broken double bass patterns in the next two bars. Very creative and physically demanding—another Jason Bittner trademark. (1:57)

"Failure Of The Devout," *Threads Of Life*

The opening of this song has a shuffle feel, which Jason develops into a four-on-the-floor triplet groove with a sticking pattern that's inspired by exercises from Rod Morgenstein. Notice how the left hand moves around the kit to play the accents. (0:00)

Full transcriptions of the songs in this article, along with a play-along version of the album The War Within (minus drums), can be found in Drumming Out Of The Shadows by Jason Bittner, Joe Bergamini, and Willie Rose (Carl Fischer Publications). The book is available at local retailers and can be ordered online at www.jasonbittner.com or www.joebergamini.com.



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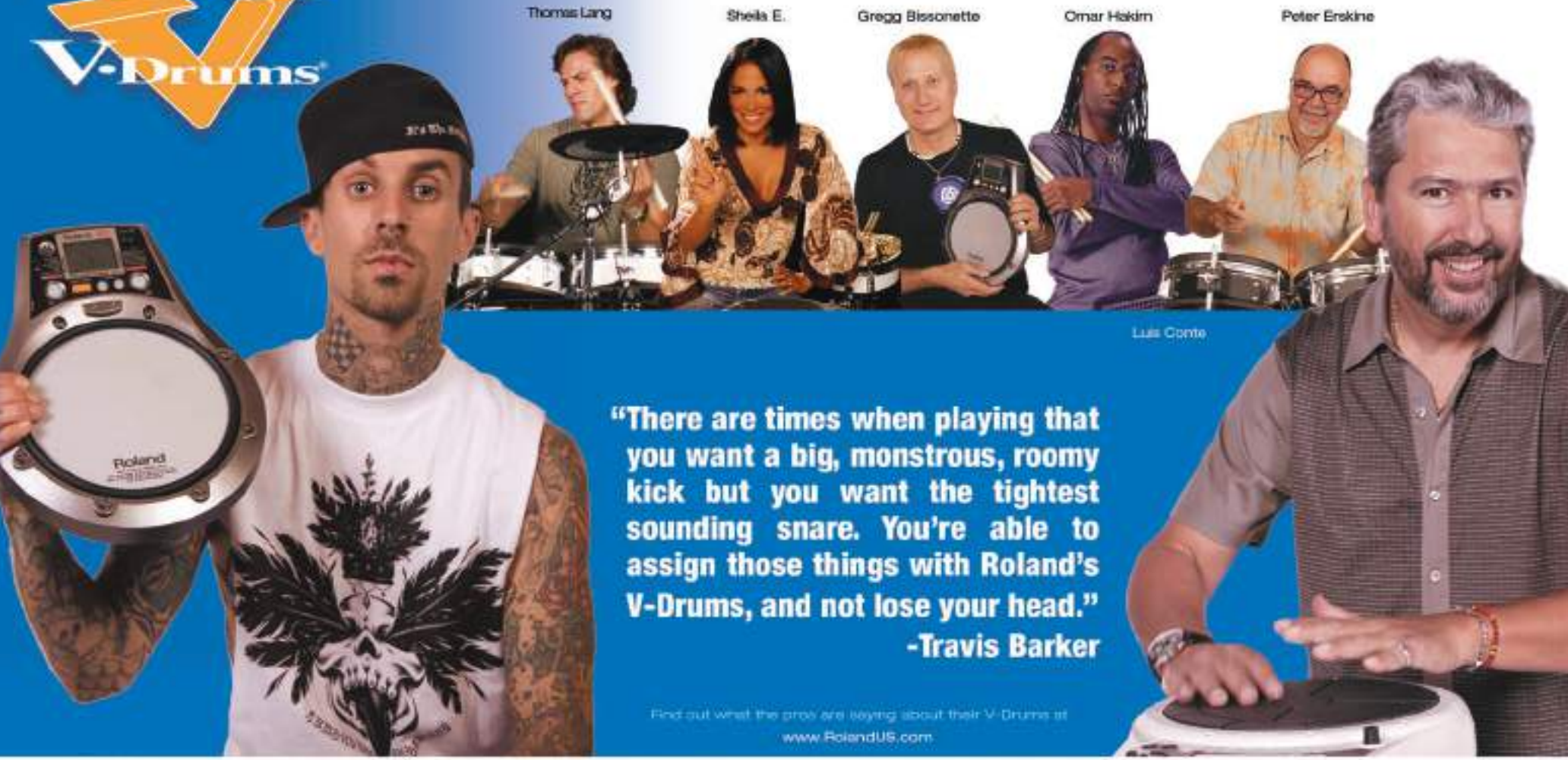

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-Travis Barker

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JASON BITTNER

Continued from page 63

parts as well. The subtleties are where my progressive influences—Mike Portnoy, Neil Peart, Mark Zonder, and Stewart Copeland—come into play. That' s where my musicality comes from.

MD: When teaching, how do you stress to kids that it really is all about playing for the song?

Jason: It doesn' t matter how many fills you can play or if you can play odd meters. If you can' t play a steady 4/4 beat, then you' re worthless in a band. That is your most important job.

Blitzkrieg Double Bass

MD: You are as conversant with your hands as you are with your feet. Your "Double Bass Crash Course" (MD Festival 2005 DVD) covers all the numbers, and it' s logical. But how do you direct someone to turn that into something musical and not merely an exercise?

Jason: That comes with experience, applying it to your own situation. I' m giving you the tools, but you have to explore your own musical boundaries. Everything in the Crash Course is very simple, some basic exercises that are easy to figure out. It' s just repetition. When I get into the syncopated grooves, the 16th notes, and the different

A longtime fan of *MD*, Jason insisted on being photographed with a proud possession, a copy of the first issue of *Modern Drummer*.

footings, I' m not thinking of those in a musical way, but as a dexterity exercise.

I have to practice double bass constantly to keep my chops up. What threw me off was playing broken patterns and realizing I couldn' t do them with only a right-foot lead. You have to mix the footings up. It' s trial & error, and it' s about developing other exercises to allow you to play double bass with more ease.

MD: You play heel-up, but your heels are closer to the ground than many drummers who use that approach. You play with the balls of your feet. As the tempo rises, do your heels go higher off the ground for more speed?

Jason: In the last couple years, my heels have come down. I still play heel up, but lately I' ve been working with Flo Mounier' s Extreme Metal Drumming 101 DVD. He is very fast. I work on his speed exercises.

Flo has you playing a tempo for a minute, nonstop, and you do it heel-up and then heel-down. I noticed on the slower tempos that there was a difference between how it sounded when I played each way, but when I got faster I didn' t feel much of a difference. And when I play faster, I can let the pedal do the work. The power also shifts from my legs to my ankles. So my heel is pretty close to the ground most

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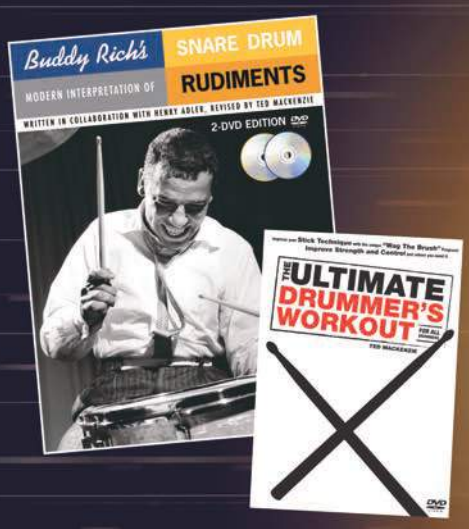
–Jason Bittner, Shadows Fall



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of the time.

MD: Where does the front of your foot land on the pedal?

Jason: Between a quarter to halfway back.

MD: Why double bass drums and not a double pedal?

Jason: I always used double pedal with Stigmata for ease of travel and loading. But I prefer two bass drums. I recorded the last three SF albums with two kicks.

MD: On Shadows Fall records, the bass drums are the loudest thing in the mix.

Jason: I thought that the bass drums were too loud on our last record, but it' s just part of the genre.

MD: How do you balance the steamroller bass drums with the bass player?

Jason: We always pay a lot of attention to that. Sometimes Paul [Romanko] plays exactly what I play. But sometimes doing that will cause it to be lost in the mix. We make conscious efforts about the bass parts. Sometimes he' ll play half of what I' m playing or play something totally different. You have to think how it will sit with the whole band.

Two-Handed Monster Mayhem

MD: When you play your two-handed ride cymbal patterns between rides on both sides of your kit, is it always in unison with the double bass pattern?

Jason: Yes. Neil Peart started me on that idea, but not necessarily on two rides. The beginning of Rush' s "Subdivisions" is a two-handed pattern between the hi-hat and the ride cymbal. Gene Hoglan and Nick Barker inspired me to play two rides.

As my playing grew on The War Within, there were a couple of songs where I brought in the two-handed ride concept on the hi-hat and ride cymbal. Then I threw the second ride up on the left side of the kit at Ozz Fest ' 05, and it never left.

I really enjoy playing both. The two-handed ride pattern also helps alleviate my tendonitis, because sometimes I ride with my left hand on the cymbal and my right hand on the snare. I' m naturally left-handed. I also change rides just to be diverse. I usually strike the snare drum with the left hand when I' m using a two-handed ride pattern, particularly if it' s a broken-up paradiddle. But if I' m playing a straight-8th or 16th-note pattern, then my right hand hits the snare.

MD: Another signature is your very clear four-stroke tom ruff.

JASON ON THE WEB

For more on Jason Bittner, including his latest activities, clinic dates, lesson info, a gallery, and even a message board, check out www.jasonbittner.com.

For info on Shadows Fall, including their latest activities and tour dates, check out www.shadowsfall.com.

And for info about Jason's side project, Burning Human, go to www.myspace.com/burninghuman4

Jason: That' s another steal from Neil Peart. It became part of my playing years ago. It was a warm-up riff I used. Then Charlie Benante and Vinnie Paul got me thinking about playing those with my feet. It all assimilated and made sense. And I spent time working the idea with the click, going around the toms, between the toms, and with the kicks.

Smell The Glove

MD: Why do you play Tama drums?

Jason: Why not?! I' ve been playing Tama since 1982. One year I got two Imperialstar concert toms. Then I got into The Police, and Stewart was playing Tama. And Clive Burr with Iron Maiden was playing Tama. Then Neil Peart played Tama. And so did the drummers in Metallica, Anthrax, and Slayer. I got my first Swingstar kit in ' 83 and my first Superstar kit in ' 87, which I used for years. Then I bought my first Starclassic kit in ' 97.

My affinity for Meinl cymbals started because they took me on when I was nobody, back in 1998. They treated me as a top artist from day one. The sound was very similar to Paiste, which I had played for years. As Meinl' s cymbal lines have grown, so has my career. They' re always evolving and coming up with something new. The best part about the company is, their people really listen to the artists. Meinl worked with me to develop my signature ride cymbal, which was the flagship of a new line.

MD: Your bass drums sound like cannons. Are they tuned to the same pitches?

Jason: My tuning is easy. Any kit I use, let' s say for a clinic, I know how to make it sound like me. One thing, we never put triggers on my drums to record. It' s always my bass drum sound. They might add an effect to make the bass drums sound fuller in the mix. There was nothing used on the drums for the new album, though. I' m really happy with the drum sound

on this album.

With the kicks, I use an Evans EQ3 head for the batter and a Headfirst logo head on the front. Inside I have two Evans EQ pads, one right on top of the other, pressed against the batter head. Nothing touches the resonant head. I also use the Iron Cobra wood beaters with an Evans AF patch on the batter head.

I tune the kick head as low as I can get it without it rippling. I use the Tama Tension Watch to make it easier for my tech to dial in the tuning on a daily basis. My batter head is at 55 in the center, the front head is at 40. I put the heads on, stretch them out, crank ' em down, loosen ' em back up again, and then tune the batter heads with the tension watch.

MD: Your snare drum is very resonant-sounding; it rings on some recordings.

Jason: I' ve used different snares. On The Art Of Balance I used a $6^1/_2$" Tama wood drum. For The War Within I used the 4" bronze piccolo. For Fallout From The War I used the $6^1/_2$" bell brass. This time I used a $5^1/_2$" aluminum snare drum. My drum tech loosened the head and the snares more than usual, and it sounded so much better; I was choking the top head.

For toms, I use the Tension Watch, tuning the bottom heads first—a setting of 50 or 55 for the mounted toms, 40 for the floors. I tune the bottom head higher than the top. The top heads are like the kick drums, low and slack, but they don' t ripple. Nice and open and full.

MD: Why do you play with gloves?

Jason: I had never developed blisters while on tour, until 2004, when we were out on tour with Damage Plan. I got three huge blisters on my hands. They were killing me. Vinnie Paul recommended I use gloves, and he gave me a pair of his so I could get through the show. Ever since then I use gloves.

The Best Drummer Ever?

MD: You' ve done all the work, the sometimes grueling monotony that' s required to achieve a high level of technique. But what has set you apart and defined your drumming?

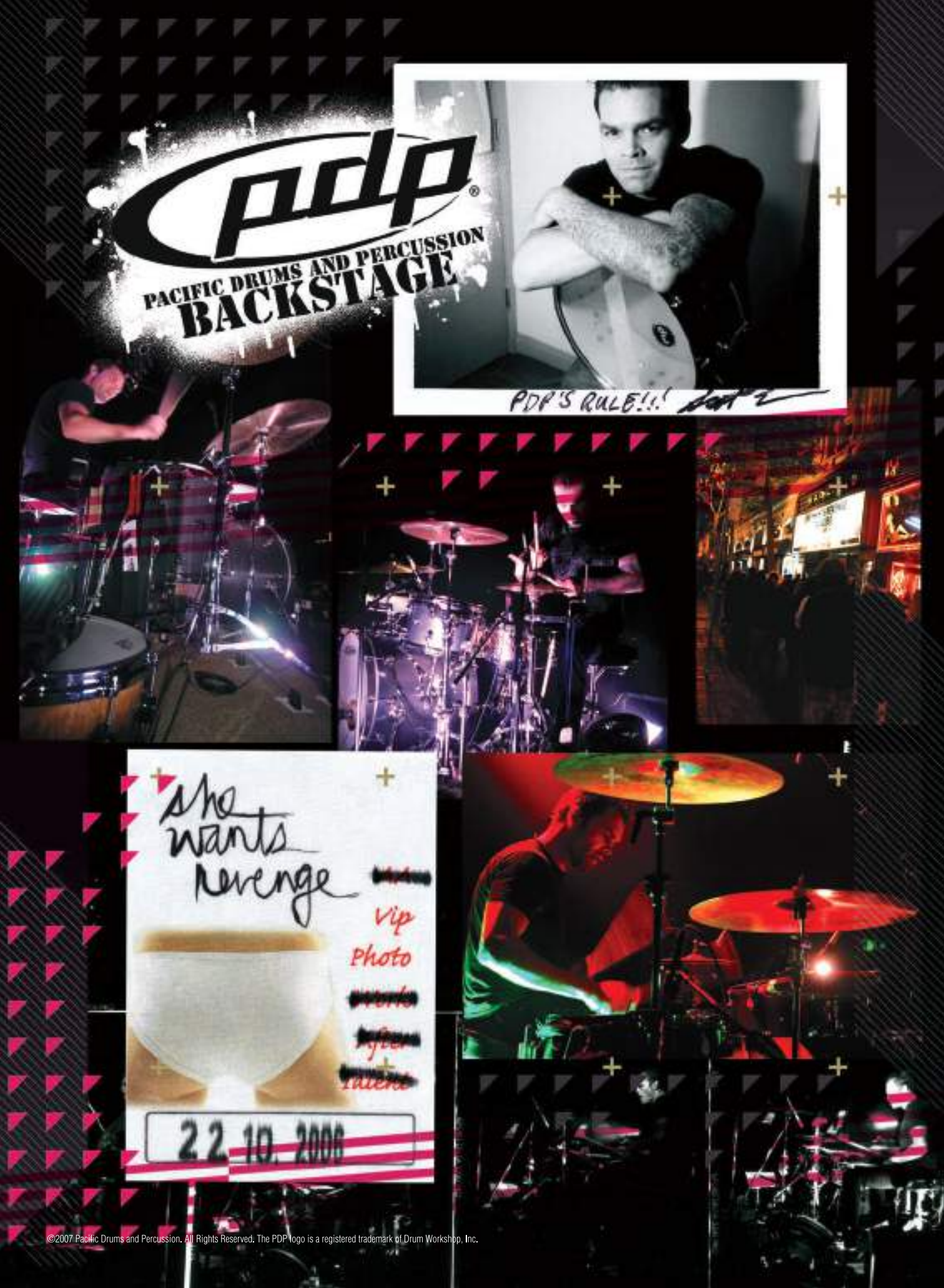
Jason: I realized that I' d never be the best drummer ever, because that man is dead. His name was Buddy Rich. Anyway, I put in a lot of hard work over the years, and some people think it shows. I' m grateful for what I do, and I still practice. But I don' t need to be the most popular drummer. If my drumming can put a smile on someone' s face, then I' ve done something right. I wouldn' t have achieved what I have in the drumming community if I hadn' t.

MD: What do you focus on in your current practice routine?

Jason: I still work on double bass—some five and seven combinations I got from Thomas Lang, some double-stroke exercises, and some dexterity patterns Steve Smith gave me.

I still take lessons when I can. Ted McKenzie, who revised the Henry Adler/ Buddy Rich book, is helping me to refine the Moeller technique and the mechanics of playing the brushes. You know, I' m a heavy metal guy, but I get these ideas in my head. In twenty years, I could be playing brushes in a lounge band for $50 a night!

I take nothing for granted. My affiliation with MD is such a big thing for me, as are the clinics, the awards, getting nominated for a Grammy—these are things I never thought I' d accomplish in my life. If it all ended tomorrow, I' d go to my grave a happy man.



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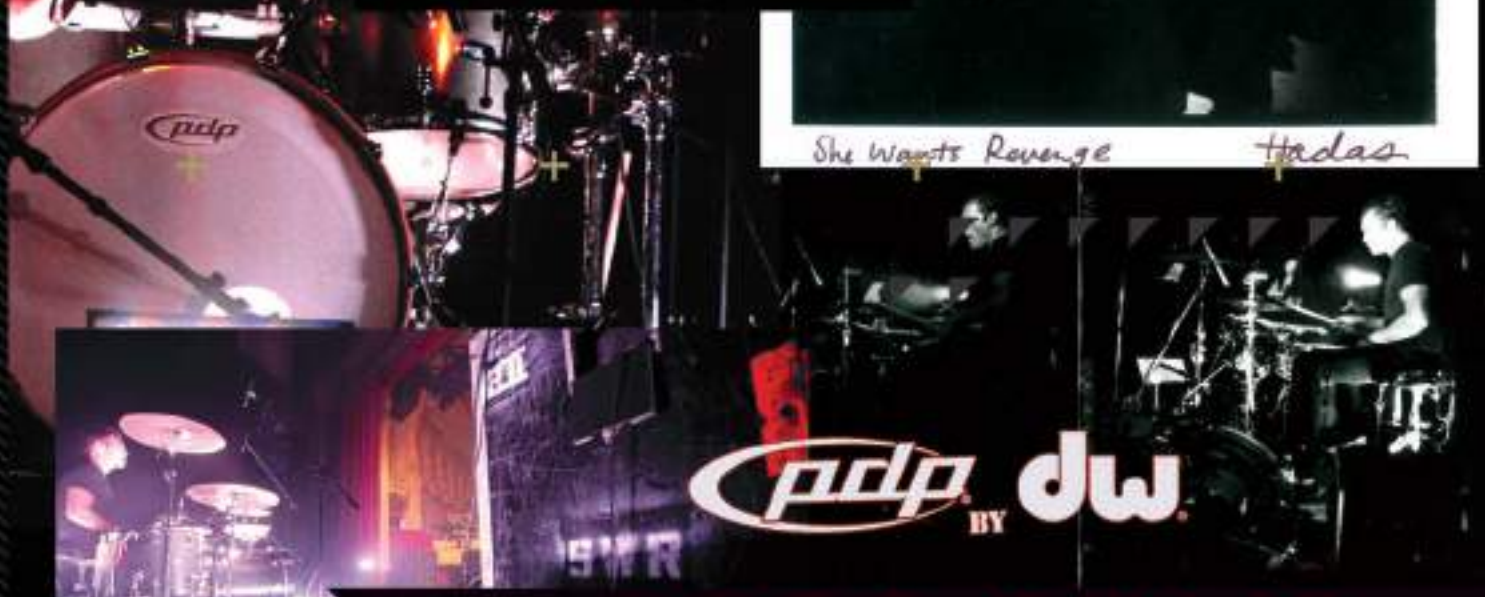

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Russ Miller could be called a jack of all trades, and a master of.....a wonderful career. He' s a musician who believes that there' s a value in all music, and he approaches his instrument in a manner that provides integrity and importance to each project he attempts.

When you look at Miller' s tremendous résumé, which includes over two hundred fifty albums with artists such as Nelly Furtado, Christina Aguillera, Toni Braxton, Jennifer Love-Hewitt, Hilary Duff, Slash, George Benson, Al Jarreau, Tom Scott, Dave Koz, George Shelby, and Eric Marienthal, and such film scores as *War Of The Worlds*, *Mission Impossible 3*, *Chicken Little*, and *Moulin Rouge*, you know that the drummer is someone who has taken his instrument seriously and is able to give any artist what he or she wants.

Miller grew up in Canton, Ohio, where he was raised by his grandparents. Their big band and jazz collection made a huge impact on the fledgling drummer. At eleven and twelve, he was playing along with Buddy Rich records. (" Not that well, obviously," he laughs.) By age fifteen, he was playing five nights a week in a Top-40 band and participating in all the school bands by day.

After high school, Miller attended the University of Miami, where he cut his recording teeth with some of the local artists, including the Gloria Estefan " contingency." But it was when Russ moved to LA in the summer of ' 96 that he started becoming very busy, working with such people as Bobby Caldwell and Nelly Furtado, and, as always, studying. Currently, he studies brushes with Jeff Hamilton and Indian music with Kurana Murthy, while constantly transcribing and analyzing CDs.

Speaking of education, Miller has become an in-demand clinician, somehow managing to squeeze in occasional clinic tours for Yamaha and Zildjian. Russ has also created several well-received educational products, including the critically acclaimed drum book/DVD *The Drumset Crash Course*. And speaking of products, Miller was instrumental in creating Yamaha' s Wedge series, as well as their Subkick bass drum miking system.

While Russ Miller spends most of his time recording killer tracks for other people, he recently realized that he needed a creative outlet for himself. That need was met with the release of his new solo album, *Arrival*, which features the drummer and his band on several tracks. It also features him dueting with several legendary drummers, including Steve Gadd, Steve Smith, and Rick Marotta, in a unique concept. Here was the opportunity for him to show the world the depth of his drumming talent. Arrival, indeed.

MILLER'S KIT

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Nouveau (maple/birch)
- **A.** 6x12 Musashi snare (oak; Jingle-Wedge attached)
- **B.** $4^5/_8$x14 Russ Miller signature snare (Groove-Wedge attached)
- **C.** 8x10 tom (birch)
- **D.** 13x14 tom (birch)
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom (birch, Cascara-Wedge attached)
- **F.** 14x20 Thunder Drum (maple)
- **G.** 16x24 bass drum (maple)
- **H.** 24x12 Daxdad bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" K Constantinople prototype hi-hats
2. 6" A Custom splash (upside down) on top of 16" ReMix EFX (with jingles removed)
3. 18" K Session crash
4. 20" K Constantinople High-Bell medium-thin ride
5. 22" K Constantinople thin ride with 8 rivets
6. 17" A Custom crash
7. 8" hi-hat (K splash top, K Mastersound bottom)

Percussion: Meinl
- **aa.** Percussion Block
- **bb.** 8" copper hand-hammered cowbell
- **cc.** Drumset Tambourine (two stacked)

Hardware: Yamaha, including two direct-drive double pedals (felt beaters, medium spring tension)

Heads: Remo FiberSkyn 3 Diplomat on snare batters, Ambassador snare-sides, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, Renaissance PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter (with 20" Remo Weckl Muff'l) with custom PowerStroke 3 logo head on front, coated Ambassador on Daxdad batter, custom logo head on front

Sticks: Zildjian Russ Miller model, Russ Miller B3 brushes

Electronics: M-Audio hardware/software, Yamaha DTXtreme 2S with A4000 sampler, Yamaha Clickstation

Microphones: Shure SM57 on top of snares, May/Shure XL57 (mounted inside main snare facing snares), Shure Beta 98 on tops of toms (live), KSM27 (studio), Beta52 with May internal mount inside bass drums, Yamaha SKRM100 Subkick in front of both bass drums

Accessories: Pro-Logic practice pads, SKB cases

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Djembe, Mondo Drumhead with black Fibreskyn graphic

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MD: The huge variety of gigs you' ve done is striking.

Russ: This year has been a dramatic example of that—doing several recordings while also touring with Andrea Bocelli and with The Psychedelic Furs. That couldn' t be more different. I have to stop at the gig and think, " Is tonight the beautiful symphony or the mosh pit?"

MD: The mindset must be different, too, as you approach your instrument.

Russ: Yes. I set out to be a session drummer. I always loved the process of recording and knew that the history of music was made in the recording of it. I' ve been really blessed to be a part of that now. But really, my general mindset was always just to be the best musician I could be on the instrument. If that meant that this week I was playing with a salsa band, next week with a symphony, and the week after that with a rock band, so be it. It was just about trying to make the best music possible.

MD: What prepared you for that kind of variety?

Russ: I majored in studio music and jazz performance at the U of M, so primarily, it was playing small-group jazz stuff and studying recording. I think some of it was environmental, because while I was doing that, I was playing in Cuban bands every night to pay my way through school. I was always an advocate of playing in casual bands. For me, that was a great situation for playing a lot of styles of music on the fly. Getting those experiences is invaluable. The mortgage company never asked me, " Did you pay your mortgage this month with a really cool bebop gig?" If the check cleared, it didn' t matter how.

MD: A lot of young people think you go right into the big stuff, and they don' t realize how important it is to not only play all that music but make the contacts. Jeff Porcaro met Michael McDonald on a casual.

Russ: I met John Secada on a casual. At my clinics I say to people, " Who wants to work at this for twenty-five years and have a six-month career?" I want the Gadd career—forty years of making music and creating history. For me, it was just a goal of playing great and playing with great guys.

Doing my new record was a dream come true for me—playing with David Garfield, John Pena, and Neil Stubenhaus. I grew up watching Garfield and Jeff Porcaro playing together. Jeff was my hero. Now David is playing in my band and it' s kind of surreal.

MD: Tell us about the new record.

Russ: It' s called *Arrival* and it' s my third record. I' ve always tried to have these solo bands as an outlet, but I never really took it out like Dave Weckl or Steve Smith. I never tried to

RUSS ON RECORD

ARTIST	ALBUM
Russ Miller	Arrival
Russ Miller	Cymbalism
Nelly Furtado	Whoa, Nelly!
Hilary Duff	Metamorphosis
Daniel Bedingfield	Second First Impression
George Shelby	Touch
Ray Charles	Genius & Friends
Jarvis Church	Shake It Off

Chicken Little (movie soundtrack)
Resident Evil Apocalypse (movie soundtrack)
Silent Hill (movie soundtrack)

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ARTIST	ALBUM	DRUMMER
Al Jarreau	Tenderness	Steve Gadd
James Taylor	October Road	Steve Gadd
James Taylor	Live	Carlos Vega
Toto	Greatest Hits	Jeff Porcaro
Peter Gabriel	Secret World Live	Manu Katché
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be a leader in that sense. I' m always being told what to play on sessions, so this was a chance for me to play what I wanted to play.

I' ve been thinking a lot about how I' ve witnessed some young drummers who have tremendous amounts of facility on the instrument, guys who can do things like double-stroke rolls with both feet on the bass drum, but they don' t have any rhythmic depth to their playing. When I grew up, players like Buddy Rich had a depth of rhythmic vocabulary, as if they had that rhythm in their brain and could execute it on any limb, anywhere on the drums, at any time.

I decided I wanted to create a project that was based around rhythmic vocabulary and depth. So I came up with this idea where I' d do ten songs with the band—David Garfield on piano, John Pena or Neil Stubenhaus on bass, George Shelby and Eric Marienthal on sax, James Harra and Ross Bolton on guitar, and Luis Conte and Richie Garcia on percussion—and in between each song I would do a duet with one of the biggest drummers and percussionists in the world.

To do this, I wrote these three-minute compositions based on different rhythmic ideas. For instance, Steve Smith, Pete Lockett, and I did a piece based on Southern Indian rhythms that Steve and I have been studying for several years. Each one of these little pieces transitions right into the next band song and then out of that into the next duet. The whole record is one big track, based upon rhythm.

The duets feature Rick Marotta, Steve Gadd, Steve Smith, J.R. Robinson, Akira Jimbo, Zoro, Johnny Rabb, and Luis Conte. Akira Jimbo and I did one based upon Japanese Taiko rhythms. Johnny Rabb and I did a drum ' n' bass thing. Zoro and I did a kind of a Earth, Wind & Fire horn-section thing. J.R. and I did another funky thing. And Rick Marotta and I did a kind of Stuff tune, which goes into a kind of R&B/Richard Tee piano vibe that David Garfield played.

This is also the first time I' ve worked with a producer on one of my albums. Chaka Blackmon was great. The project has been such a joy for me and such a challenge to attempt to meet those guys at their level of playing, and hopefully to maintain my own voice.

MD: Tell us about dueting with Steve Gadd.

Russ: Steve is one of my biggest heroes, and when he did the Zildjian clinic tour [" Mission From Gadd"] over the past couple of years, I went and hung with him on the bus for a couple of days. He even asked me to come up at one of his clinics, and we played a brush duet together. I was scared out of my wits.

So for the album, I wrote a piece that was a 16th-note medium samba, based on those duets. For me, Steve is one of the best musicians to ever touch the instrument, way beyond being a great drummer. There' s a big difference between being a great *musician* who plays drums and just being a great drummer.

MD: It' s what you were saying before about rhythmic depth and not just applying the beats where they belong.

Russ: I look at some of the guys who play amazing, technical things and think, " Wow, that' s awesome," and I know the hours it takes to be able to do that. But on the other hand, I' ve never had Christina Aguilera turn around and say, " Hey, can you play that double bass thing with the China cymbal?"

MD: What was your first recording?

Russ: I did a bunch of smaller records that were released in different areas in Florida with different local bands. The first big recording that anyone would know me from was the " I' m Like A Bird" track, which was on the first Nelly Furtado record. That won a Grammy and the award for Record Of The Year.

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MD: How did you hook up with The Psychedelic Furs?

Russ: Their management company manages some of the other artists I've toured with, like Meredith Brooks and Peter Cetera. That company also helps me organize the details when my band tours. I've always dug The Furs' music, and they have a huge following. I love figuring out the art in these different situations. It's really easy to go, "Hey man, I've been studying jazz brushes with Hamilton for three years. I'm above this." But I always try to find the art in something and the joy in doing it. I think that kind of attitude has been so important in my career.

MD: What's the challenge of doing the Andrea Bocelli gig?

Russ: The challenge for me is finding what my role is on any gig—what's my role tonight? Is it for me to support this vocalist, to make them absolutely the most comfortable they can be so they can perform their best? Is it for me to say something on my instrument? Is it just to shut up and play, or is it my show? It's analyzing what I'm doing on any given night and making sure that I maintain that M.O.—that method of operation—through the whole gig.

I've seen some of the biggest names in the business who are great drummers, but I thought, "Man, it's killing me tonight to see how much he's overplaying, how much he's not playing the gig." To me, that's where Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, or Jeff Hamilton were always so right. When you see Gadd, part of the tension of it is, "This guy can rip our face off at any second, but he just won't do it." It's the sheer musical maturity of all those years, to serve the people and serve the music. To me, that's the key. And sometimes you're not applauded for doing that. Sometimes you watch someone and they give you every lick they know in the first five minutes and you sit there going, "Okay, now what?" It's really about stamping a personality onto your playing with a depth that goes way deeper than this lick or that lick.

MD: So tell us about working with an orchestra.

Russ: I've done that a lot. Even years ago, a lot of artists I played with, like The Fifth Dimension and Bobby Caldwell, had orchestras. That warmed me up for some of these big things I do now.

MD: Do you have any tips for playing drums for a vocalist like Andrea Bocelli?

Russ: Again, you're expected to do nothing but play the best music possible. There were a couple of TV dates that we did where we played "Besame Mucho," and a couple of things where all I did was play a cross-stick, kick, and a shaker. Everyone was going, "Man, I saw you on this TV show, but you didn't play very much." But I wasn't *asked* to play very much. Stop trying to witness the drums all the time. Witness *music*. I've seen Gadd play at Wembley Stadium with a pair of brushes and not play a fill. Andrea knows nothing but, "I expect to hear world-class music being played," and if anything I do doesn't fit that, I've failed miserably.

There seems to be a theme now among some of the younger R&B players where there is so much overplaying. I think, Have you ever heard Earth, Wind & Fire, Bill Withers, or any of those guys? It was never about all of that stuff. I see guys playing where the verse starts and they start playing a drum fill. I love drums, I've studied drums, I have a passion for the instrument, but I know that my job is to play music. A lot of guys have said they wished I played more on my DVD, but the DVD was about learning the different styles of music and how to use them effectively in a professional setting. It wasn't about me going off.

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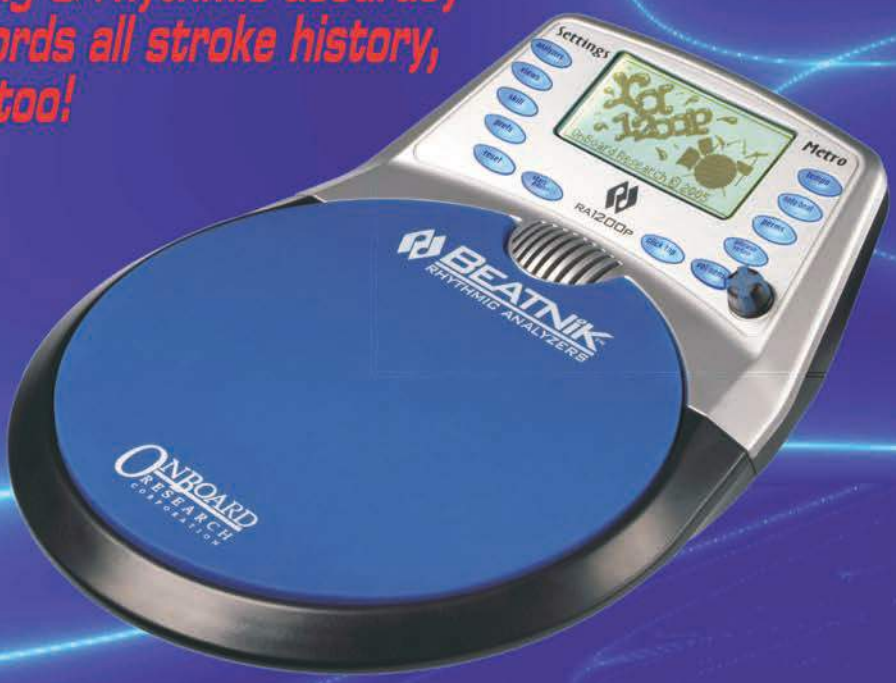

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MD: What are some of the recordings, other than your own, that you're most proud of?

Russ: In the pop world, I would say that the Nelly Furtado records made a statement artistically. I think we really created a sound on that first record, where it was one of the first times the combination of world instruments, drumkit, and all of the loops and samples were used. Nelly has a unique voice, and it all worked together. Many people copied that sound.

In the jazz world, there are some nice records I've done with George Shelby. I always felt that he was saying something and we were trying to do some hip stuff. There's some live stuff that's out there with Bobby Caldwell that's great, including a concert DVD that was taped in the Philippines. I love Bobby's music. I worked in his band for three and a half years.

The Hilary Duff records were solid. Any time you're staring at multi-platinum sales, there's something going on there, some kind of magic on there. I'm also proud of some of the movies I've done.

MD: Recording for movies can be very complicated. You have to be an ace reader. Where did you hone your reading skills?

Russ: Definitely in school, but I've always read. I've always been on situations where I've had to read. And in situations where they don't hand me a chart, I write one. If I'm in Capital Records and the studio is costing $3,500 a day and the engineer is $1,500 a day, they don't want me to sit around and learn the song. I have refined writing charts to the point where I can hear a track once or twice and write the chart and then go out and play it.

With movies, the pressure is really on because you don't have that kind of time. If you're with an orchestra on the floor, you don't want to be the one, at $40,000 an hour, to be responsible for the second take.

There are two kinds of recording on film—a source recording and a score recording. If we're doing a source recording, it's almost like doing a pop record, where you're putting together the song or the track and playing on it and they're placing it in the movie somewhere. A score recording would be however many cues there might be, maybe seventy different cues, which can be anywhere from ten seconds to three minutes long. On those sessions, a lot of times I'm on the floor with the orchestra.

MD: What other films have you worked on that you feel good about?

Russ: I enjoyed *Chicken Little* because I got to play with Patti LaBelle and Joss Stone. *War Of The Worlds* and *Mission Impossible 3* were great, too. And the war drum stuff we did in *Silent Hill* was awesome. We brought in these huge 8'-diameter Taiko drums from Remo's artists facility. I was in Capital Records Studio A by myself for nine hours, recording huge drum parts and layering it with drumkit stuff. That was *so* much fun.

MD: Tell us about some of the signature products you've been involved with.

Russ: All of the things I've come up with have come from my wanting the product: Necessity is the mother of invention. It's me leaving a session and going, "Man, I really wish I had…" For instance, I was doing loop sessions for some of the producers in LA, the guys who do the Dr. Dre stuff, and on one of the sessions we were doing a track for the *Moulin Rouge* soundtrack. They said, "We want you to use this snare drum." It was a 12" bamboo snare drum that I had worked on with Yamaha that never came out because the shells kept cracking. But it was a great-sounding drum. The verses were cross-stick, but on a 12" drum the cross-stick sound sucks. So I helped design the

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vintage hoops for Yamaha that were made out of wood, because at the time I was thinking, "Man, I wish I had a vintage wood hoop so I could put it on this drum and get a good cross-stick sound."

On that session, I ended up having to mount another snare drum off of a bass drum and play the cross-stick on it, because I couldn't move the snare drum to the left of the hi-hat because it would be out of the stereo image. I thought, "I wish I just had a piece of the hoop to play." Well, that night I went home and sawed off a piece of that vintage wood hoop—woodworking has always been a little hobby of mine—and I came up with a mount. I took it to Yamaha and said, "Hey, how about if we came up with this thing where you could mount a piece of vintage wood hoop off of any drum so you can have a great cross-stick sound on any drum you want?" Four months later, the prototype for the Groove Wedge was in my hand, and at the next NAMM show, the whole series came out. I've been with Yamaha for seventeen years, and for me, it's just been awesome.

It was the same thing with the Subkick. It came about because producers were coming to me asking to mimic loops that they had made on their drum machine, but they wanted it to feel better. I would play down the part they had, but even with the killing drum sounds we were getting, we weren't able to match the sampled stuff they had. Those samples sound like Godzilla, and I thought, "I've got to get to the bottom of this kick drum. It's not coming close to these samples."

I took the old idea of using a speaker as a microphone. As I say, it's not a new idea; Paul McCartney used a speaker on his bass amp on The White Album. But I worked on it, going through about thirty different speakers to find the right one. I wired it inversely to turn it into a mic. It created the thud and super low tone of the bass drum, but it didn't sound musical. So then I thought, "This needs to have a tone, a resonance." I thought, "That's what a drum shell does, it resonates." So I thought of putting the speaker in a drumshell. I ripped apart an old electronic pad shell and mounted the speaker inside, and it worked. At this point, the Subkick has almost become an industry standard. It's become the biggest-selling signature product in the history of Yamaha. And it's such a kick for me to see guys who are my heroes using it and seeing it on TV all the time.

MD: If you had any advice for younger players, what would it be?

Russ: I came to the conclusion a few years ago that I would never understand how to play a groove or pulse until I had a better control of the space between the notes than the notes themselves. Too many players are waiting to play the notes. In fact, to me, a lot of players sound like they're asking, "When can I play the next note?" This is what leads to the massive amount of note-playing going on today.

My grandmother can play a note on the drums, but she can't control the space, so she can't play a pulse. This made me think about what's really important. When you can control the space between the notes, you can add energy, relaxation, and release to the music. I think this is why young players have a problem playing brushes. With brushes, as with timpani, you're responsible for sustain. Most drummers are waiting to play their next note and forget about what should have been the sustain of the notes they've already played. To me, this is essential to being a good drummer.

To hear some of Russ Miller's tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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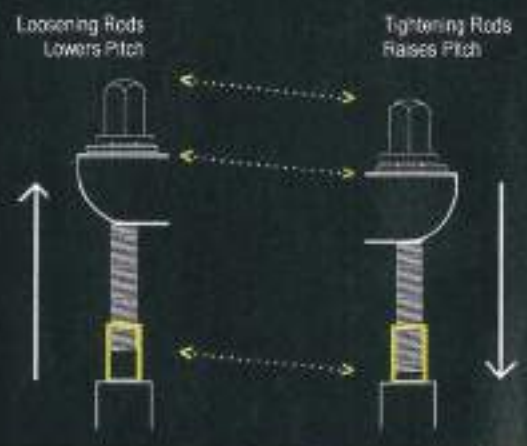

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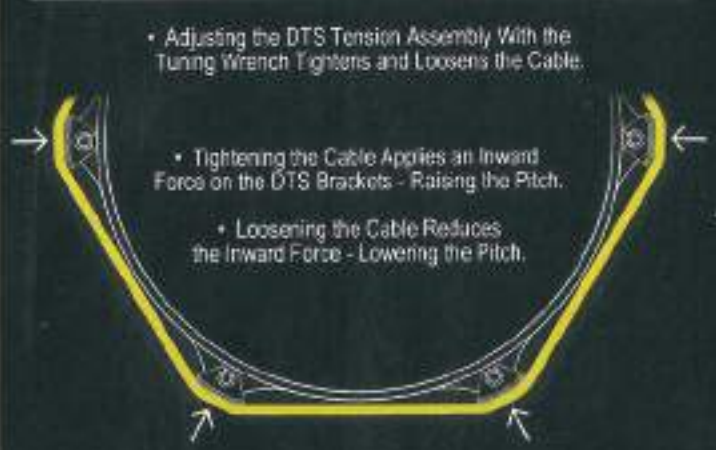

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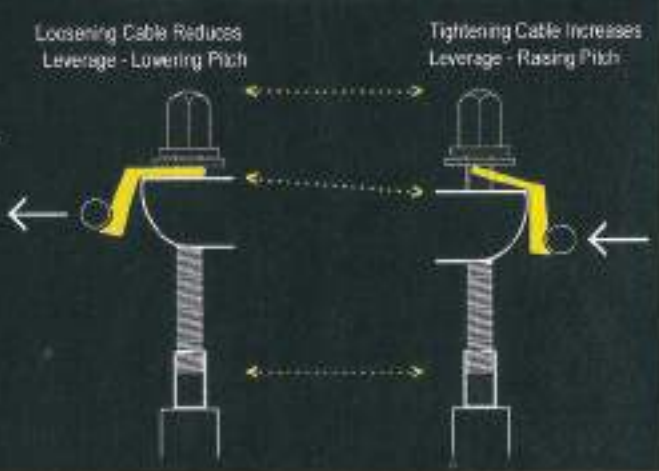

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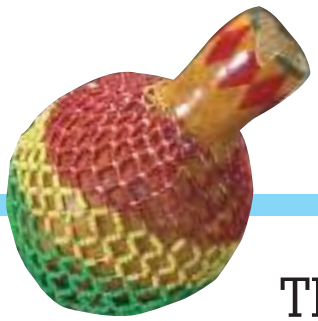

The Art Ensemble Of Chicago's

FAMOUDOU DON MOYE

Multi-Directional Drummer For All Seasons

Story by Bill Milkowski • Photos by Gene Ambo

There's a temptation to categorize Don Moye as a free jazz drummer. After all, he has, since 1970, provided the rhythmic propulsion and percussive coloration for the Art Ensemble Of Chicago, an avant-garde institution and the most celebrated group around still sustaining the momentum of '60s experiments by John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, and Cecil Taylor. But putting Moye in that free jazz box would be dismissing a lifetime of experience playing in a plethora of idioms, including bebop, R&B, Haitian, Jamaican, African, and a wealth of others. Even in the context of the Art Ensemble, a group that integrates the whole history of jazz and all African-American musical traditions into a highly personal way of making music, Moye covers a multitude of drumming styles in the various "episodes" that flow organically, one to the other, in concert.

Examples abound throughout the Art Ensemble's expansive discography, which now numbers upwards of forty recordings. On uptempo freebop blowouts like "There's A Message For You" (from 2004's *Sirius Calling*) or more straightforward 4/4 swingers like the Ensemble's theme song, "Odwalla," Moye exhibits the kind of hip, interactive sizzle inspired by his all-time favorite drummer, Philly Joe Jones.

On more subdued numbers, like the hauntingly beautiful ballad "Slow Tenor And Bass" (from *Sirius Calling*), Moye summons up the kind of alluring old-school brushwork that recalls the great Ed Thigpen. On percussive jams like "Talko" (from *Sirius Calling*) or minimalist sound sculptures like "New York Is Full Of Lonely People" (from *Urban Bushmen*), he takes a more expansive, Zen-like approach to drumming. While on "Theme De Yoyo" (from his very first recording with the AEC, 1970's *Les Stances A Sophie*), Moye can be heard laying down some funky Clyde Stubblefield–inspired backbeats behind the soulful vocals of R&B songstress Fontella Bass.

Add to Moye's prolific output with the Art Ensemble his past contributions to trumpeter Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy and New York Organ Ensemble, his numerous recordings with pianists Don Pullen and Randy Weston, baritone saxophonist Hamiet Bluiett, fellow AEC member (and resident poet and ordained Shinshu Buddhist priest) Joseph Jarman, The Julius Hemphill Big Band and The Leaders (with Bowie, alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe, tenor saxophonist Chico Freeman, bassist Cecil McBee, and pianist Kirk Lightsey), or his potent encounters with soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy and fellow drummer Steve McCall, as well as his current work with Leo Wadada Smith's Golden Quartet, Kirk Lightsey's Trio, his own Sun Percussion ensemble and Folk Bass Spirit Suite trio, and you get a more well-rounded picture of this multi-directional drummer for all seasons.

Supremely sensitive to dynamics, Moye has always contributed to his musical surroundings with uncannily keen instincts, whether it's providing a gentle, nuanced touch to an ambient soundscape, dancing around the drums with polyrhythmic aplomb, or unleashing tribal thunder in the midst of a raucous free maelstrom. A remarkably open-minded and ever-curious musician, Moye is, at age sixty, still the eternal student eager to follow the muse wherever it may take him. And in the course of his amazing musical journey, which began five decades ago in a drum & bugle corps in Rochester, New York, it has taken him all over the world. "The amount of opportunity depends on the amount of work a person is prepared to put in," says the shaman-like figure whose colorful face paint and African garb has been his visual signature in the Art Ensemble since the '70s. "Everywhere I've been, I've created work."

World traveler Moye was in Paris in December of 1969 when he was recruited to join the ranks of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago, whose motto to this day remains: Great Black Music, Ancient To The Future. After going through a series of drummers since its inception in 1967, including Alvin Fielder, Bob Crowder, and Phillip Wilson (who left the band to join The Paul Butterfield Blues Band), the AEC began performing as a drum-less quartet with each of the charter members (trumpeter Lester Bowie, tenor saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, alto saxophonist Joseph Jarman, and bassist Malachi Favors) doubling on percussion and "little instruments." Hooking up with Moye in Paris immediately added newfound depth and momentum to the group as it entered its classic and most influential phase.

Following a two-year sojourn in Europe, during which time they made concert tours, festival gigs, and TV appearances while also recording albums and film scores, the Art Ensemble returned to Chicago in 1972 and recorded their triumphant homecoming album, *Live At Mandell Hall*, for the Windy City's fiercely independent Delmark label. Subsequent recordings like 1973's *Fanfare For The Warriors* (Atlantic Records), along with early AEC albums like 1969's *A Jackson In Your House* (Affinity) and 1970's *Tutankhamun* (Black Lion), and important AEC offshoot projects like Roscoe Mitchell's 1966 free manifesto *Sound* (Delmark) and Joseph Jarman's equally liberated 1966 outing *Song For* (Delmark), established a new standard in collective improvisation. These recordings had a profound effect on a generation of provocative risk-takers and composers, including John Zorn, Tim Berne, Ned Rothenberg, Anthony Coleman, and Elliott Sharp. A string of four significant later recordings for the ECM label—1978's *Nice Guys*, 1979's *Full Force*, 1980's *Urban Bushmen*, and 1984's *The Third Decade*—made a similarly huge impact on another generation of young musical upstarts, like trumpeter Steven Bernstein, slide guitarist David Tronzo, and jam-band godfathers Medeski, Martin & Wood.

> "What does 'free' mean? To me, it means disciplined to the point where you can play anything and be spontaneous—but it's *not* just a random selection of notes."

In 1983, Moye participated in a landmark drum summit titled *Pieces Of Time*, recorded on the Italian Black Saint label. Along with colleagues Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves, and the great bebop innovator Kenny Clarke, who was living in France at the time, Moye and his fellow percussive adventurers explored to the hilt, in various configurations, the African principle of drums as a melodic instrument.

The AEC continued to prosper and record prolifically throughout the '80s and '90s, right up until Lester Bowie's death on November 8, 1999 while out on tour with his Brass Fantasy band. While Bowie's expressive trumpet work,

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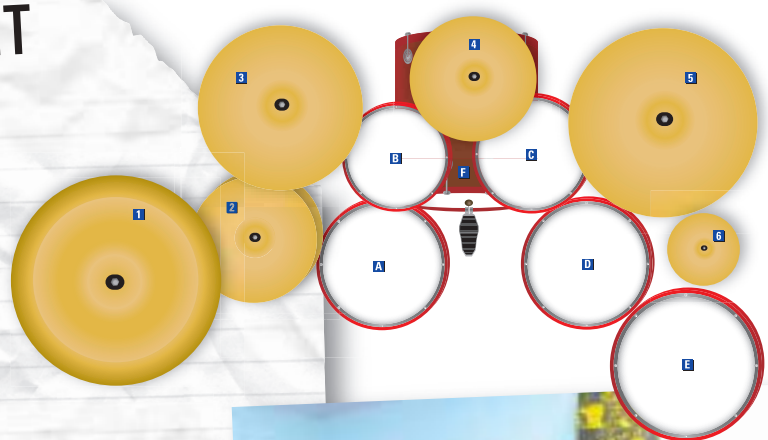
Percussion: wind chimes, sleigh bells, cowbells, Indian bells, Paiste sound plates, bird calls, ratchet, sirens, shekere, maracas

Sticks: Roll (Italian company that makes Moye's signature stick and mallets), Pro-Mark 5B (oak or hickory), Regal Tip brushes (hickory handle, non-telescoping)



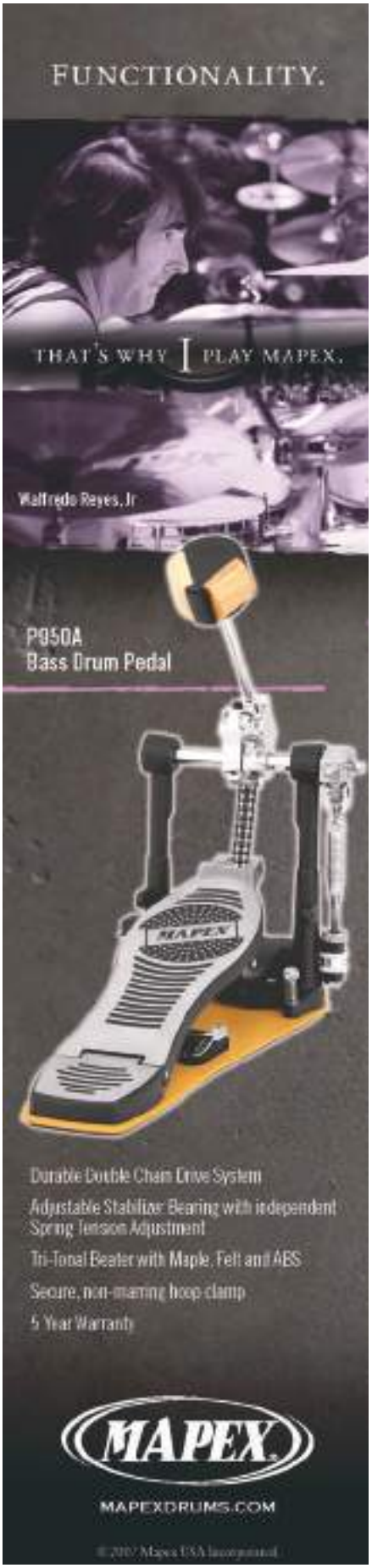
trademark white laboratory coat, and ever-present sense of humor—a mainstay of the AEC since its inception—were sorely missed, the remaining three members (Joseph Jarman had left the group in 1993 to devote full time to a dojo and akido center he had opened in Brooklyn) carried on as a trio. Their 2001 recording, *A Tribute To Lester* (ECM), contained Moye's percussion jam "Sangaredi" and the telepathic, suite-like "He Speaks To Me Often In Dreams."

Jarman re-joined the AEC in 2003 to record *The Meeting* (the AEC's debut on Pi Recordings), which included the spacious, dream-like percussion and woodwinds piece "Wind And Drum" and Malachi Favors' nineteen-minute suite, "It's The Sign Of The Times," which highlights each musician in expressive solo sections before the quartet comes together for a dynamic group climax. Bassist Favors would record *Sirius Calling* with the AEC in April, 2003 before his passing in January, 2004. Mitchell, Moye, and Jarman subsequently hired young trumpeter Corey Wilkes and bassist Jaribu Shahid as successors to Bowie and Favors, respectively. They appear together on the band's 2006 two-CD set, *Non-Cognitive Aspects Of The City*, which was recorded during a four-night engagement in April, 2004 at the Iridium nightclub in Manhattan.

Moye remains committed to his ongoing adventures with this new edition of The Art Ensemble Of Chicago. And as the group's resident archivist, he is also currently involved in the monumental task of organizing materials, digitizing videos, transferring tapes to CD, and dealing with other AEC artifacts that have been accumulating over the decades in their Chicago office. "We've got a collection of stuff going back forty years," laughs Moye. "There's something like 8,000 photos, 3,000 gig posters, 2,000 cassettes, a few hundred videos, a couple hundred DAT tapes, a hundred or so reel-to-reel masters. Many of these are outtakes from our various studio projects."

Meanwhile, a slew of live recordings is being released as part of the AEC's Historical Archives Series, including *Salutes The Chicago Blues Tradition* (a two-CD set recorded July 7, 1993 in Geneva with special guests Chicago Beau, Amina Claudine Meyers, Steve Lacy, and James Carter) and *Kabalaba: Live At Montreux* (recorded in 1974 with special guest Muhal Richard Abrams), as well as live documents of a 1984 Paris Festival gig with Cecil Taylor, a Frankfurt Festival with Don Pullen, and a Milano gig with Kirk Lightsey. All of these CDs are available through mail order via the band Website (www.artensembleofchicago.com) or Moye's own Web site (www.famoudoudon-moye.com).

Modern Drummer talked to Moye to find out what things, musical and non-musical, may have shaped his liberated attitude toward rhythm and music-making.



10 Classic Famoudou Tracks

Here are the recordings that Don Moye considers his very best. They are *all* highly recommended.

1. **"Alili Afrikan Song"** (from *Sun Percussion Summit,* AECO/Southport Records)
2. **"Walk Of The Lunga"** (from *Sun Percussion Summit,* AECO/Southport Records)
3. **"Nibaldi Isle"** (from *Pieces Of Time,* Black Saint Records)
4. **"Afrikan Woman"** (from *Art Ensemble Of Chicago With The Amabutho Chorus Of South Afrika,* DIW Records)
5. **"Zero"** (from The Leaders' *Out Here Like This,* Black Saint Records)
6. **"Morning Desert Song"** (from The Magic Triangle Trio's *Calypso Smile,* Black Saint Records)
7. **"Medley"** (from The Kirk Lightsey Trio's *Goodbye Mr. Evans,* Evidence Records)
8. **"Got My Mojo Workin'"** (from *Art Ensemble Of Chicago Salutes The Chicago Blues Tradition,* AECO Records)
9. **"Sonala Nobala"** (from Lester Bowie's New York Organ Ensemble's *The Organizer,* DIW Records)
10. **"Bush Baby"** (from The Arthur Blythe Septet's *Bush Baby,* Enja Records)

MD: Some of your early musical experience came at the Detroit Artists Workshop. What was that like?

Don: They used to have these communal dinners with all kinds of artists, painters, dancers, and musicians, all centered around Wayne State University, where I went to school. John Sinclair, a community organizer who ran the Artists Workshop, had all kinds of people like Timothy Leary and poets Amiri Baraka and Robert Creeley coming through there. And I used to rehearse there a lot with Danny Spencer and Ronnie Johnson, who were also members of the Detroit Artists Workshop.

Eventually there was a transition going on at the Artists Workshop. It was during the whole hippie movement with LSD and stuff, and gradually the focus of the Workshop changed from jazz to more experimental rock-oriented music. They started getting more into things like Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton. And that' s when I kind of diverted from that path. I was committed more to my jazz studies and to African music, so I left Detroit for Rome in 1968 with bassist Ron Miller and flutist Arthur Fletcher as part of the band Detroit Free Jazz.

MD: When did you begin playing drums?

Don: I started playing the kit up in Rochester, where I was in the drum & bugle corps. The last group I performed with actually became national champions. We used to travel all over with that group. My father was a drummer. He played in The Flower City Marching Band. Rochester is called the " Flower City," and the Elks Club had its own marching band that my father was involved in. The Elks Lodge also used to have different people coming through—Grant Green, Jimmy McGriff, Jack McDuff, Kenny Burrell, and other popular organ trios of the day. That was my early exposure to jazz.

MD: I find it an interesting paradox that you come from this very disciplined background of drum & bugle corps, and yet you end up in a very free situation with The Art Ensemble Of Chicago.

Don: Well, what does "free" mean? To me, it means disciplined to the point where you can play anything and be spontaneous—but it's *not* just a random selection of notes.

MD: So your freedom is in fact based on a foundation of discipline. You acquired the skills so that you can play as freely as you want.

Don: It expands to my playing with Gospel groups, African drummers, Haitian drummers, bebop players.... Two of my earliest teachers in Chicago were tenor saxophonist Von Freeman and Willie Pickens, the dean of piano players around town. These were the people I worked with as soon as I got off the boat from Italy in the early '70s. Coming to Chicago, my first musical experiences besides playing with members of the AACM [Association for the Advancement of Creative Music] and the Art Ensemble were working with seven or eight bebop groups around Chicago. I used to drive Von Freeman to the gigs every night, making $12 a night at community gigs where it was no cover charge or anything like that. But it was an education.

Then I was also working with dance ensembles and I had my own percussion group called The Malinke Rhythm Tribe. And I worked in a piano trio with [pianist/organist] Amina Claudine Meyers when she wasn't on the road with [tenor saxophonist] Gene Ammons. I was also working with Jimmy Ellis, one of the deans of Chicago jazz, a saxophone player out of the Sonny Stitt school. And I was working with [pianist] Muhal Richard Abrams, [alto saxophonist] Henry Threadgill, and a group called The Pharoahs, which was a predecessor of Earth, Wind & Fire. The core element of The Pharoahs was Maurice White. When he took that band to California, they evolved into Earth, Wind & Fire. So all of that comprises my background. So when you talk about free music, I don't know what that means.

MD: It sounds as if you were involved in all aspects of music in your formative years.

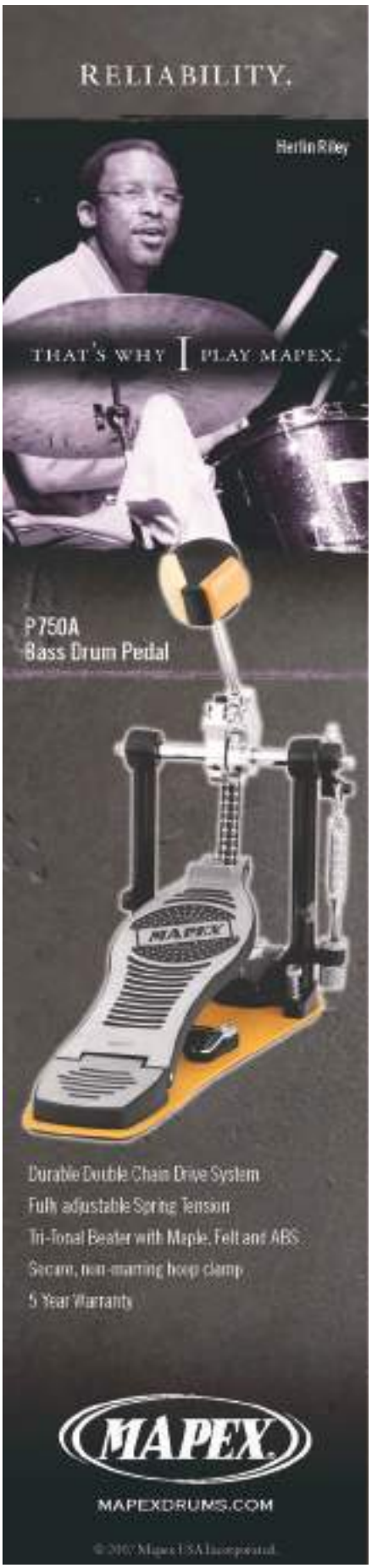
Don: Any good drummer is. For jazz drummers, our responsibility is to further the tradition. Our job is to familiarize ourselves with a lot of forms, then choose an area that you want to focus on and expand within that. And there were a lot more choices back in those days because of the access to music in the community. It's difficult for young students or musicians to get that kind of exposure now, because people don't go out as much to hear music anymore. So there's not that many places where you can go to learn your trade by observing firsthand.

Kids end up nowadays going to school and getting taught jazz by frustrated musicians. I'm not condemning the music schools, because the level of theory and technique is more refined now. Musicians *are* better educated. But the education that I got coming up as an aspiring jazz musician was in the nightclubs and in private situations, by going to a great musician's home in the day time and soaking up stories, and by studying firsthand at jam sessions at night. It was all part of an oral tradition. That's how I came up.

MD: A lot of young musicians today who are a product of a purely academic environment are missing out on the importance of that oral tradition. There's a lot to be said for just hanging out with the masters after the gig.

Don: Or before the gig, or during the gig. I used to carry guys' cymbals to get into places if I was under age. I'd be hanging around the back door at the nightclub, just waiting for the drummers to come along. Every time I would see Roy Haynes, I used to carry his cymbals for him. I used to do that with Philly Joe Jones too.

Philly Joe was my favorite drummer of all time. He and I got real tight years later, when we toured together in 1983 as part of the Sun Ra All-Stars with Richard Davis, Don Cherry, Lester Bowie, Archie Shepp, John Gilmore, Marshall Allen, and Sun Ra. And during that tour we would always cover each other's back. I remember one time I left my cymbals on the stage and when I got back to the hotel he had dropped my cymbals back at the room for me. There was always little stuff like that going on between him and me.



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MD: Who else besides Philly Joe would you cite as an important mentor figure in terms of drumming?

Don: Papa Jo Jones is up in the race too, because I spent some quality time with him in Paris for three weeks. I was hanging out with him every day. I had met him in a jazz club one night and we got to talking. He said, "Okay, be at my hotel tomorrow morning at 8:00. And bring an orange with you." So I got to the hotel at 8:00, and we started hanging out every day after that for the next couple of weeks—morning, noon, and night. He took me around to the whole scene in Paris, showed me where Bird and Bud Powell and them hung out.

Kavega Kofi Moyo

Vintage Moye—in full makeup

This was thirty years ago, so a lot of the people from that older generation from the '40s and '50s were still alive. So that was a chance for me to hang with the great Papa Jo. And in the course of that, he was doing an organ trio record with [bassist] Major Holley and [organist] Milt Buckner. I would go in the studio with them every day, so it was like on-the-job training just being able to watch him work. It was a direct influence from one of the masters of that whole tradition that he represented, and that's something you can't get in any academic situation.

I also got a chance to spend quality time with Cozy Cole, who played in the house band at the Hotel Nagresco on the Riviera in Nice, in the South of France. This was a top, five-star hotel on the beach, and I used to go there every day to see him. He'd go out every afternoon to have cocktails and a snack, so I used to sit down with him every day and listen to him talk about all the different things that he had been involved in during his life. That was a good education right there.

MD: During your time in Paris, you must've also run into [bebop drumming pioneer] Kenny Clarke.

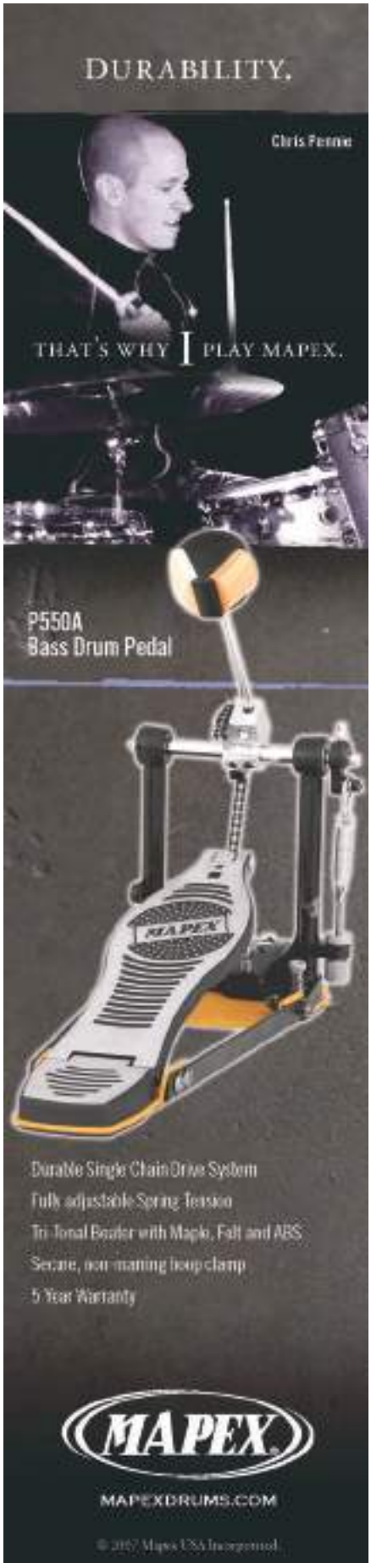
Don: Oh, yeah. In fact, the last record that he did was with a group that Andrew Cyrille and I had together called *Pieces Of Time*. We did a record together with just four drummers—Andrew, Milford Graves, Kenny Clarke, and me. Initially, Kenny didn't want to do it, but Max Roach talked him into it. Max ended up writing the liner notes to that album.

MD: What have been some misconceptions about The Art Ensemble Of Chicago during its forty-year history?

Don: When I first got in the Art Ensemble, there was this whole movement of people that were unfamiliar with the historical perspective of what we were trying to do. They all had this idea about what the concept of free improvisation was, but a lot of them didn't know that Malachi Favors, for instance, came up in the old-school tradition of Chicago. Favors was in the trenches in the '40s and the '50s as a student of Wilbur Ware, and he got a chance to go to jam sessions and see Charlie Parker and John Coltrane hanging out on the corner on the South Side of Chicago back in the '50s. So his musical dimensions were expanded through that bebop tradition, not just through the so-called avant-garde.

Similarly, a lot of people didn't know that Lester Bowie had come up in St. Louis playing with blues cats like Albert King and also touring in R&B bands. Lester's dream was to play trumpet in James Brown's band. These are some deep roots we're talking about here. So I don't know what this concept is where people think the roots of the AEC's music aren't connected to anything.

I can't speak for other musicians of the improvisational persuasion, but I know that my own studies and my influences all came directly out of that African-American tradition, the American tradition, the African tradition, and the universal percussion tradition first-hand. I get lost when people talk or write about the music and make assessments of it. One has to understand that whatever a person is playing at the moment is not necessarily a



reflection of his total musical experience. And in the case of the Art Ensemble, each of us have musical experiences that run deep in all kinds of different directions.

MD: Going back to your period in Paris during the late ' 60s, how did you initially arrive there?

Don: Well, I went to Paris with [soprano saxophonist] Steve Lacy. I had been working in Rome at a place called the Folk Studio, which was a hangout for all the foreign musicians in Italy. I met people there like [tenor saxophonist] Gato Barbieri. I also hooked up with Steve Lacy there. He had a studio and we would rehearse every day. That' s all he did—play all day and then do gigs at night.

So I ended up going to Paris with Steve' s band. I had already met the Art Ensemble prior to that in Detroit, because John Sinclair used to bring musicians in to the Detroit Artists Workshop to perform. He brought in people like [poet] Amiri Baraka, [saxophonist] Marion Brown, and Timothy Leary. I was going to Wayne State University in Detroit and hanging a lot at the Artists Workshop, and one day Roscoe Mitchell came through with the early Art Ensemble as a trio, because Phillip Wilson, one of the original drummers, had left the band to go on the road with Paul Butterfield. So I first met the Art Ensemble guys in Detroit. Then later, during my early time in Paris, when I was working with Steve Lacy and Wayne Shorter' s brother, trumpet player Alan Shorter, I met them again in the winter of 1969 and ended up joining the group. My first gig with them was a recording session for the film *Les Stances A Sophie* And then we went on from there. At the time I felt like I was caught in between my commitment to Steve Lacy and going in the Art Ensemble, but Lacy said, " Man, are you crazy? You better go and get on with your life. Go about your business."

MD: And here you are, thirty-six years later, still playing with the Art Ensemble.

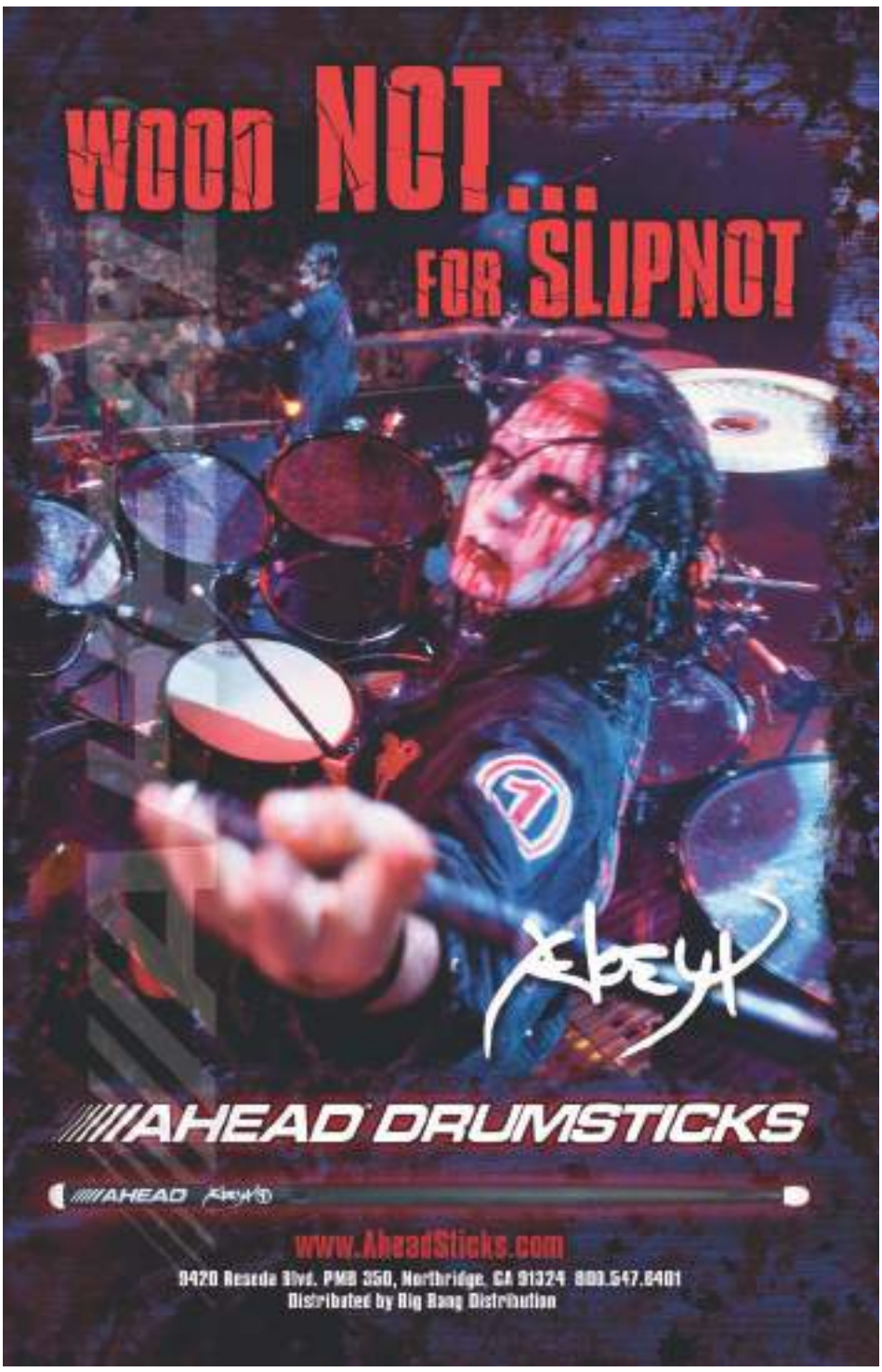
Don: Yes, and through Steve Lacy I met another good friend of mine, this guy from Italy named Marcello Mellis, a bass player from Sardinia. He was a classic example of a renaissance man—well educated, art collector, played bass, knew all about antiques and history. So between him and Steve, they helped refine my approach to surviving in Italy and how to really get some returns from my experience in Europe. Because you see, a lot of musicians who went to Europe never took advantage of things that were going on outside of the musical environment. And this is a big mistake. You have to be multi-faceted if you' re going to be be an international citizen of the world.

So between Steve and Marcello, that' s when I refined my interest in languages. I now speak French, German, and Italian pretty damn well, and that' s helped me with my business dealings. There are a couple of approaches you can have to life anywhere outside of where you come from. A lot of people have a negative approach to being there for whatever reason, so you have to find some positive element other than what you' re doing to make your stay there easier.

MD: How did living in different cultures affect your approach to the kit?

Don: It exposed me to the international brotherhood of rhythm. You meet people that are masters in their own realm, whatever country or rhythmic characteristic that might be, and you take from that to enhance your own vocabulary. I only spend quality time in environments that have a strong percussion tradition or rhythmic tradition that might be expressed through other instruments.

Sardinia is a good example. It has a strong rhythm tradition because it' s part of the trans-



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Mediterranean culture, with influences from North Africa and the Middle East converging on this little island community off the mainland of Italy. So that was part of what I was looking for in going there, and now I' m the drummer in residence for their annual jazz festival.

Similarly, I went to Haiti and Guadalupe because they have a drum tradition that comes pretty much in a pure form directly from West Africa. The reason I didn' t go to Jamaica first is because I didn' t take time to investigate the rhythmic origins of that music. But then I found out later about the core history of the Jamaican drumset tradition and the hand drumming tradition there, which is reflected in the Niabingi music coming directly out of Africa. The Niabingi drummers have all these traditional songs that are not in patois or dialect. They' re sung in the languages that they brought with them from Africa.

MD: So in addition to being an archivist and a drummer, you' re an ethnomusicologist.

Don: What does that mean? [laughs] Well, I also do furniture restoration as a hobby. Besides making instruments, I' ve got this whole collection of furniture that I restored. That' s the stuff that keeps you from going crazy.

At a certain point in your commitment and your ability to express yourself, you have to have a release valve, or else the stuff can drive you crazy. The demands of music, especially for drummers, are enormous. And if you go crazy or you end up getting bitter, then you limit yourself. And I don' t want to limit myself, I want to keep growing.

MD: You seem to be the eternal student.

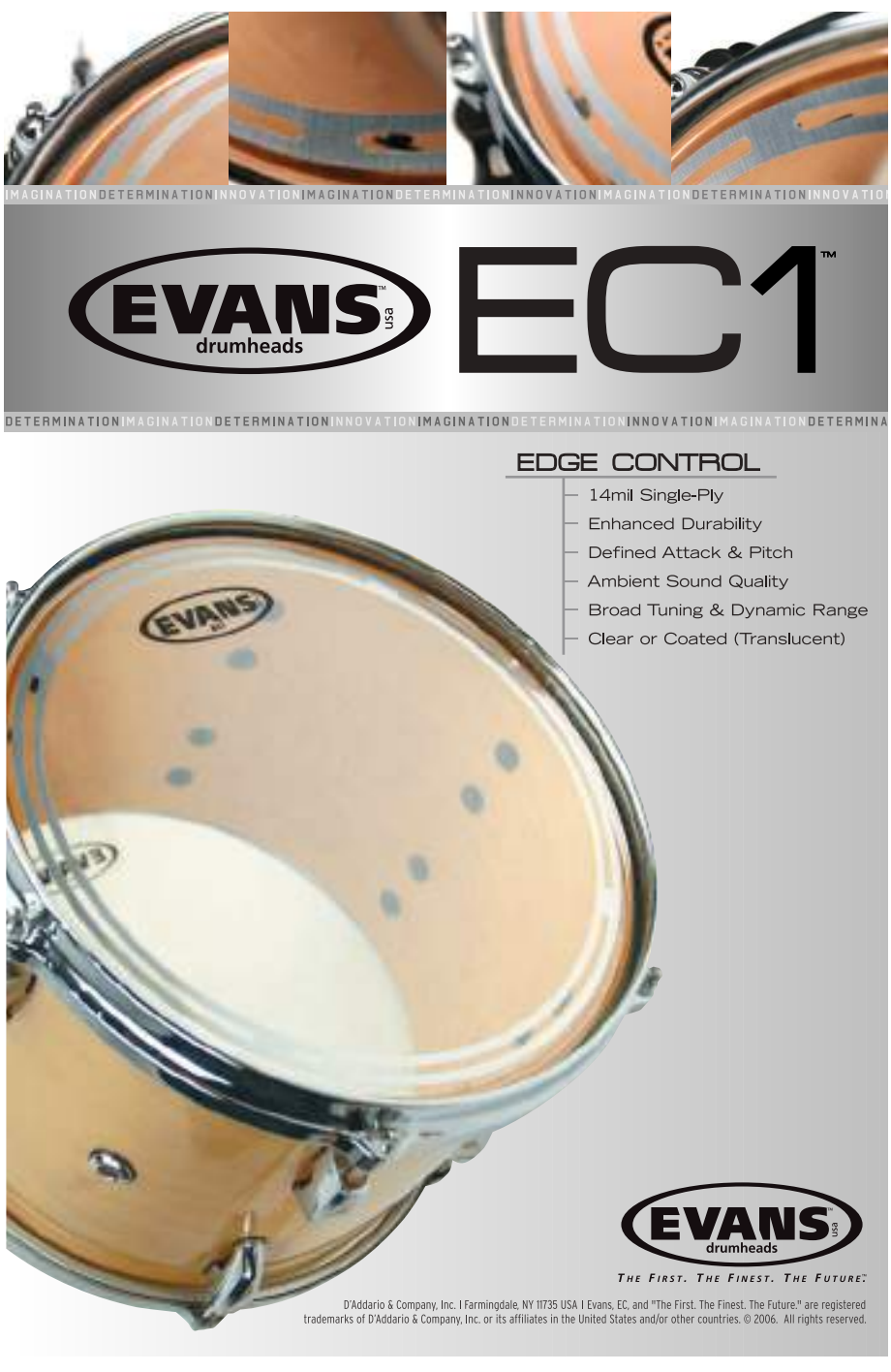
Don: Aren' t we all? Right now I' m trying to learn how to deal with this computer stuff. It' s a whole other kind of woodshedding. And I also have a big interest in gardening. I have a group patterned after Max Roach' s M' Boom percussion ensemble called The Creative Use Multiple Percussion Ensemble, Crafts, Woodworking, And Gardening Society. The people in that group range from age six to sixty. They get the drumming experience, and then I show them how to make wardrobe and do face painting and makeup. The woodworking activities relate to drum repair, and then the gardening society aspect of it fulfills my commitment to being a gardener, because I' ve got a couple of gardens around town.

MD: What other groups aside from The Art Ensemble Of Chicago do you currently have going?

Don: One is Folk Bass Spirit Suite, my collaboration with Baba Sissoku, a master drummer from Mali, and Maurizio Capone from Napoli. We did a recording together, which is dedicated to the memory of Malachi Favors, Johnny Dyanni—an African bass player I worked with a lot—and to Marcello Mellis.

But my main focus for the last thirty years, outside of the Art Ensemble, has been my Sun Percussion Ensemble, which I first recorded back in 1975. It' s usually eight drummers, including percussionists from Brazil, a master tabla player from India, and some South American cats.

And finally, I want to mention my latest project, The Odyssey And Legacy International Orchestra. It consolidates all the different projects I' m doing. The theme for that is "Our Musical Odyssey Is Our Children' s Cultural Legacy."



To hear some of Don Moye's tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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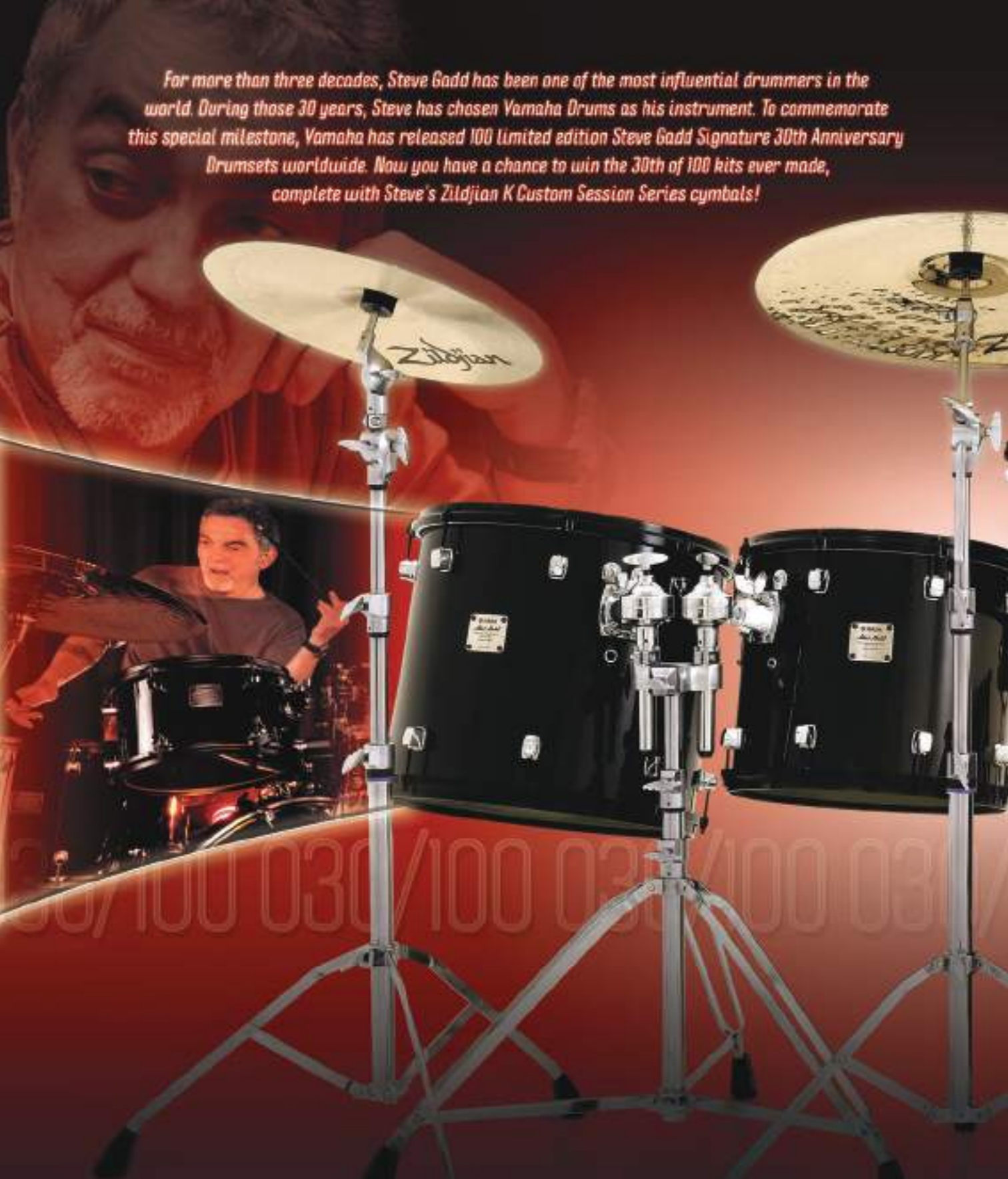

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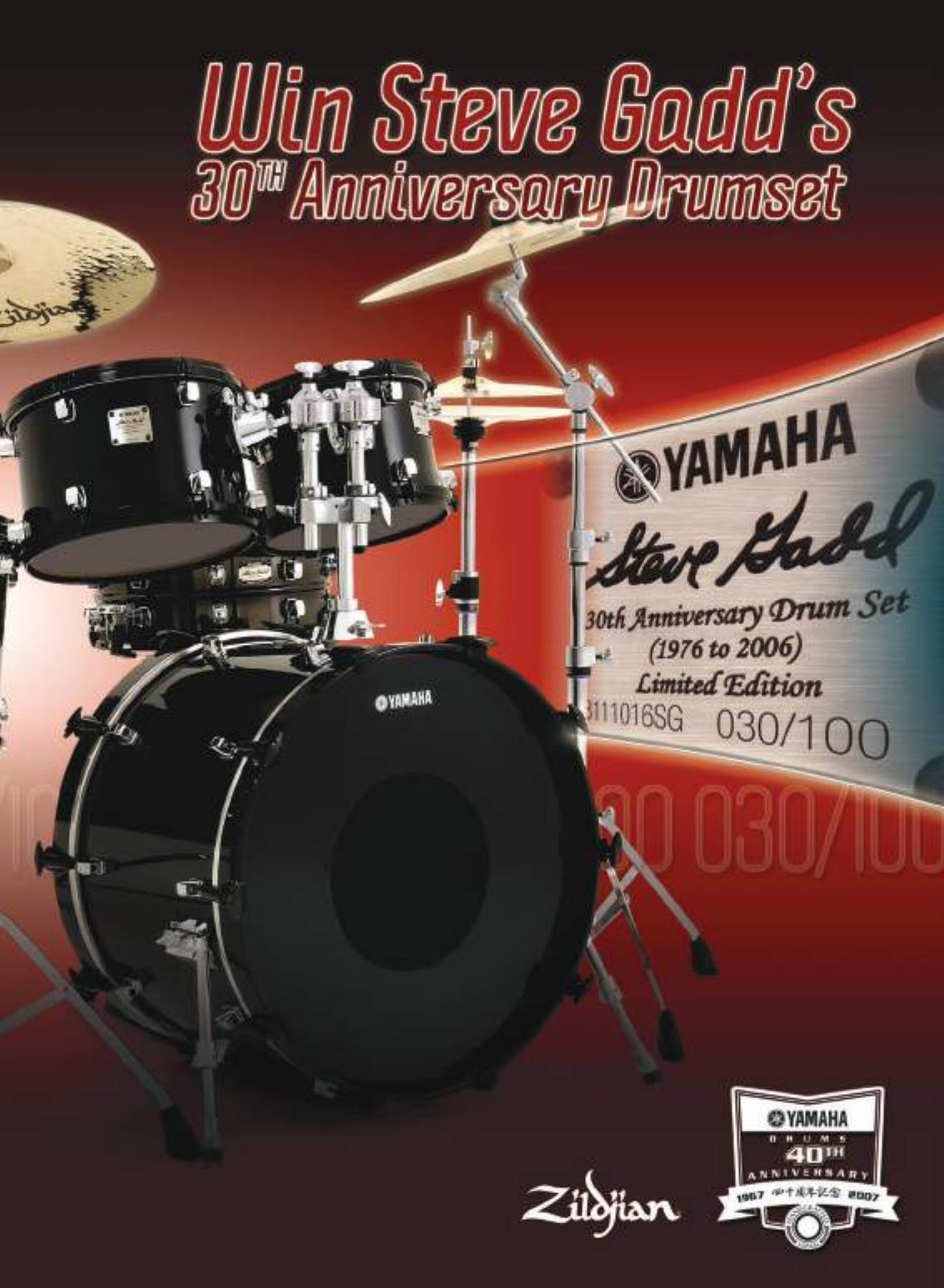


Rod Morgenstein

Revisiting His Finest Recordings

by Rick Mattingly

Listening to CDs that span a large portion of Morgenstei's career is especially enjoyable because of all the different styles of music they encompass. And in a lot of cases, you can hear several of those styles on a single disc.

George Stubbs

" It seems like every band I' m in is schizophrenic," Rod says, laughing. " Are The Dixie Dregs a rock band, a country band, a fusion band, a jazz band, an English folk band? We' re all of those things. And with Winger, most of the songs people know, like ' Seventeen' and ' I Can' t Get Enough,' are hard rock tunes. But there is this other side to the band that is very musician-oriented, with a little bit of prog thrown in there."

The albums Rod chose for this discussion basically comprise the second half of his career. " Around 1992 I started to feel that I was at a more mature state of musicianship, having gone through the Dregs and the fusion thing, but also having had the Winger experience, which brought me to another level of appreciation for all kinds of music," Rod explains. " When I brought that experience back into the fusion things, I felt I was playing at a higher level."

Not only has Rod worked with a variety of bands, but several of them are ongoing projects that keep Morgenstein very busy. For example, after the release of *Winger 4*in October, the band toured Europe and the UK. A five-week US tour began February 1. In between, The Dixie Dregs toured. The Rudess Morgenstein Project will be headlining the Baja Progfest in Mexico in March and Calprog in May, and they will also be in the studio. Rod has also done tracks for an upcoming Jordan Rudess solo CD. And Jazz Is Dead is preparing to release their first studio CD. (There may be a band name change due to legal considerations.) On top of all this, Rod somehow maintains a teaching schedule at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

" I pride myself that I' ve worn many hats, from instrumental fusion to heavy metal to power pop," Rod says. " I' ve been faced with some interesting challenges. So versatility, to me, is the ultimate, because it enables you to have a lot of career possibilities and to be a different-sounding drummer from everybody else."

T Lavitz
From The West (1987)

This album shows a more jazz side of me on " Saturn Return," which is a combination swing and samba. " Reunion" is a Gottlieb/Metheny kind of tune with straight 8ths, but a broken-time thing. So that shows a side to my playing that you don' t find on other records.

The Dixie Dregs
Bring ' Em Back Alive (1992)

This live recording really captures the essence of what The Dregs are about. It has a lot of our personal favorite songs, culled from the studio albums. " Assembly Line" and " Divided We Stand" have drum grooves that I worked really diligently on to come up with something that had a personality of its own.

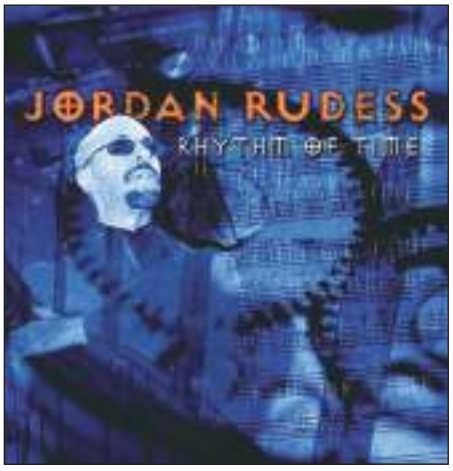
" Cruise Control" is probably the band' s most popular tune, and it has a drum solo in the middle. This particular solo combines a stand-alone drum solo with music I created on keyboards using keyboard and percussion sounds to make it a little different. Then there' s the guitar and drum section that became a classic Dregs thing that everybody enjoyed.

The other song I want to mention is " Hereafter," which has always been my favorite Steve Morse composition. It was also my late wife Michele' s favorite song, and I played it at her memorial service.

Winger
Pull (1993)

That was the simplest, most basic drumming I had ever done on a record. The producer, Mike Shipley, who was Mutt Lange' s engineer for many years, called me up. He said, " I know about you guys, Rod. I just worked with Simon Phillips, and I want to make sure we' re not getting a fusion guy, and if I need things to be simplified you' ll be amenable to it." I' m always open to everything, plus I was happy to be working with this guy. But my first experience with him was that call telling me he was concerned about working with me. [laughs]

" Like A Ritual" has a tribal drum solo at the end that goes on



for a couple of minutes. We thought it would be really interesting on a heavy metal record to do something that you wouldn' t normally hear on that kind of recording. So I came up with three different rhythms that we looped about twenty or thirty times each, and then I jammed on the drumset on top of that.

Various Artists
Burning For Buddy (1994)

That was a thrilling experience—not having played with a big band since college and then almost two decades later finding myself playing with the Buddy Rich big band! DCI was there videotaping, so I had to play with all these lights and cameras on me, and then [producer] Neil Peart was saying, " Time is money, so you have to get this in one or two takes."

The song I was originally given was called " Good News," which was about ten minutes long. I spent three months shedding it. Then two days before I was supposed to go in, they called and said that they had added more drummers and we wouldn' t have room for a ten-minute song. So I had one day to learn " Machine."

Kip Winger
Thisconversationseemslikeadream (1997)

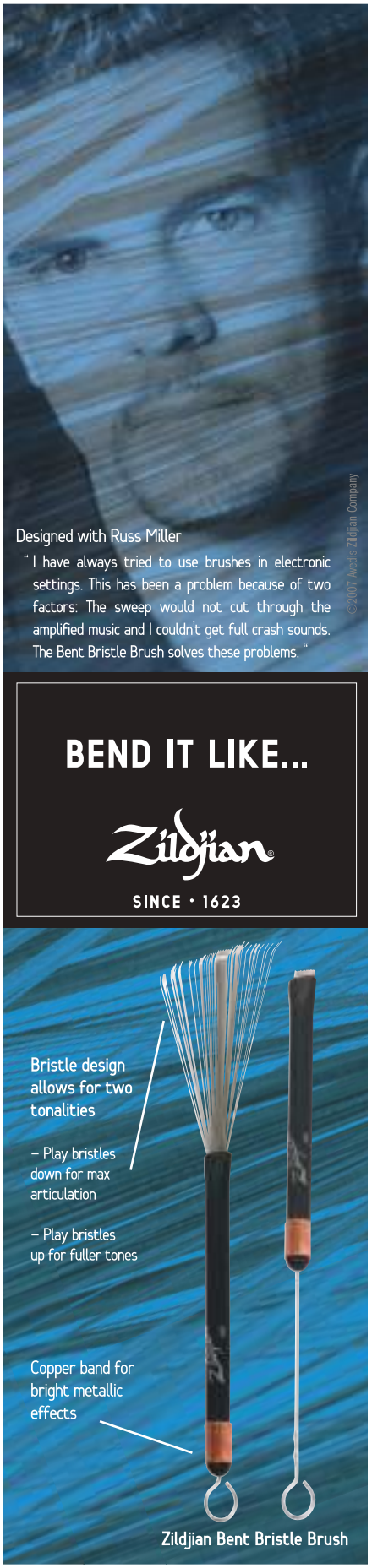
Kip Winger is one of the most talented musicians I' ve ever worked with. People who only know him as the frontman of Winger have no idea of the depth of his talent as a singer, songwriter, producer, engineer, guitarist, programmer, and on and on.

The music on this album is sophisticated pop in the style of people like Peter Gabriel or Sting. My approach to this drumming has a different sensibility. Even though you' re not hitting any less hard, you have to be more delicate and use more finesse.

Kip loves when I throw in something less " normal," kind of messing around with the time. So I did that on " Kiss Of Life," " Monster," and " Don' t Let Go." On " Here," he wasn' t even planning on having drums on it. But when I was listening to it, I said, " Kip, you gotta have classic Ringo tom fills come in the middle of the tune and then play throughout." It was super simple, but it was very effective.

Jordan Rudess, Rod Morgenstein
Rudess Morgenstein Project (1997)

That album is close to my heart because it' s my coming out as a songwriter; half the songs are mine. I had written " Cartoon Parade" in 1975, and we used to do it in The Dixie Dregs. But it never got recorded, so it was wonderful to do it with Jordan, because he' s a sound designer. That song probably has fifty different keyboard sounds in it. And it would be an incredible backing track for a cartoon!



ROD MORGENSTEIN

When Jordan first sent me a tape of "Over The Edge," it took me hours to make sense of the way this guy thinks. Jordon loves to write very complex pieces of music that have twenty different sections, which can make learning the song very involved.

"Odd Man Out" combines drum soloing with a keyboard composition. On this track I played almost all the keyboards. The opening solo is layered drums where I used Rutes, sticks, and maraca mallets. It was fun creating all that. You have to put a little bit of thought into it to be different.

Platypus
When Pus Comes To Shove (1999)

When we came together, each of us came in with two songs fully or almost fully written. Ty Tabor is into this cool musician/vocal thing. I was more interested in the vocal thing myself, because most of my career had been instrumental fusion. Derek Sherinian just wanted to do a Dregs-type record because his dream was to be recognized as an instrumentalist. So it's kind of a mish-mosh of different kinds of music, but the playing is really good.

"Platt Opus" was written on the spot. Derek was having a lot of creative inspiration as we were writing it. Another tune I like is "Rock Balls/Destination Unknown." To me that's like Jeff Beck fusion. "Standing In Line" is sort of balls-to-the-wall. I rode on the crash cymbal, which is fun to do, but the thing that makes that song interesting is that it's not all in 4/4. And I'm proud of a song I wrote called "Chimes," even though it doesn't have any drumming on it.

Jazz Is Dead
Great Sky River (2001)

I was so nervous to follow Billy Cobham in that band, because he was a huge influence on me in the '70s. The concept of Jazz Is Dead is you play a little bit of a Grateful Dead tune and then you jam on it for ten or twenty minutes and explore who you are as a musician. Everything I had done up to that point was much more controlled. This was like, anything goes. The audience wants you to take chances. That's the spirit of jam-band music. So I jumped in to see what that world was all about, and it became about the most fun thing I've ever done.

The Jelly Jam
The Jelly Jam (2001)

The Jelly Jam is like a musician power pop band. We only had a week to get the music together before we went in the studio. So you have to tap into your creative side fast.

A couple of the songs, "I Can't Help You" and "I Am The King," were written around drum grooves I came up with. The guys came over to the house, I started playing the groove, they started jamming, and it evolved into music. The groove on "I Can't Help You" is kind of based on Led Zeppelin's "Immigrant Song." It's such a cool beat, and I was thinking about how I could bring it somewhere else. So it ends up going from 5/4 to 4/4. On "I Am The King," I didn't want anyone to know where "1" is.

Jordan Rudess
Rhythm Of Time (2005)

This was the most challenging record of my life, in part because there was a time constraint. When Jordan asked me to do his solo record, he hadn't written a note, but the drums had to be recorded in three weeks. So as he completed songs he sent them to me.

When I got the CD of the first couple of songs, three seconds into it I was having heart palpitations because I had no idea what he was doing. That's what progressive music is at times. Every measure was different. I spent about seventy-five hours listening to the songs and making these crazy little charts.

This is the only recording I've ever done where there were three or four spots where I couldn't even figure out what the counting is. I tell students to never play something just by feel. You have to know what it is, because if you don't and you get lost, you'll never find your way back. But in this case, some things were so bizarre that I just learned them by feel.

Winger *4* (2006)

This album features my favorite drum sound of anything I've ever done, which is Kip Winger in engineer/producer mode. *Winger 4* is a much more grown-up album than the first Winger albums. The lyrics are very serious.

"M16" is a funky, syncopated thing in three, which is unusual for hard rock. But Winger does a lot of stuff that's a little different from the norm. At the end of "Generica," there's a guitar and drum jam that you'd never hear on a rock record. On "Disappear," I do a little bit of beat displacement, which is another thing you don't usually hear in this kind of music.

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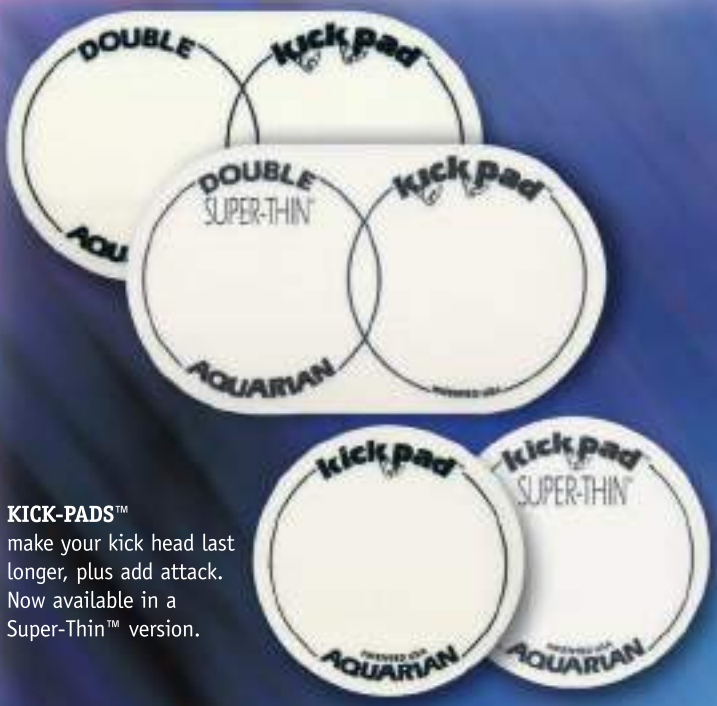

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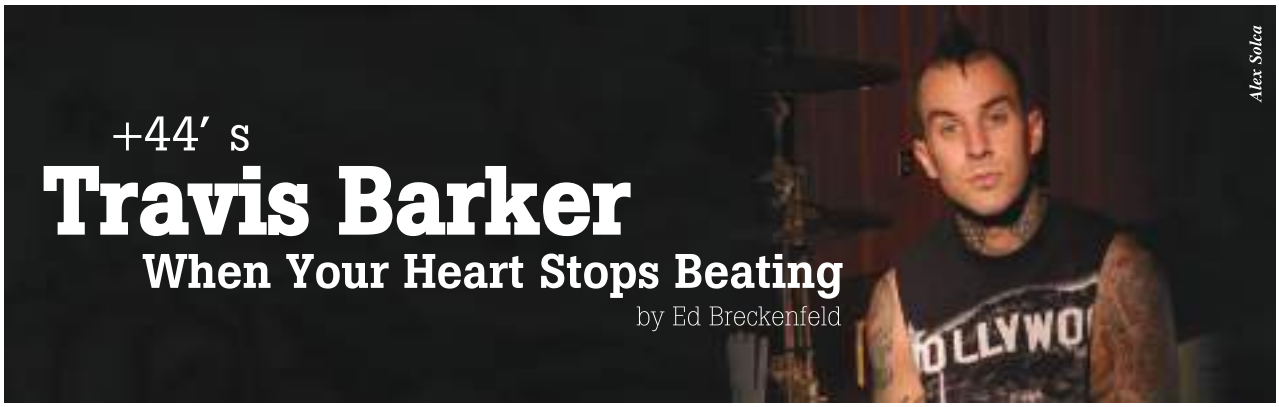
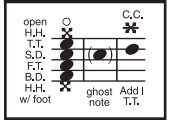


+44's Travis Barker

When Your Heart Stops Beating

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY



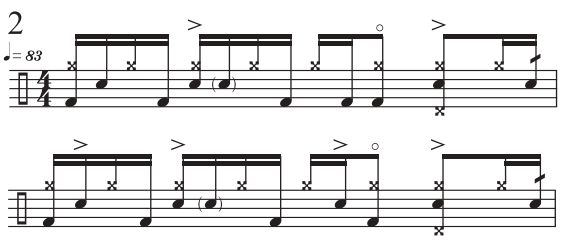
The last time we looked at Travis Barker's drumming (January 2003), Blink-182 was on hiatus and Travis had released a new disc with his side project Box Car Racer. The BCR album gave the drummer an opportunity to explore imaginative beats, while also showcasing some strong rudimental chops. Now that Blink is officially defunct, Barker's latest band, +44, is a return to his former group's revved-up punk/pop sound. Let's check out a few wicked grooves from +44's debut.

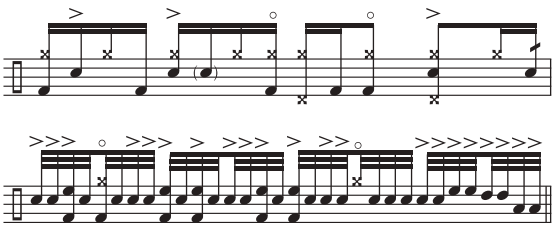
"Lycanthrope"

The album explodes from the onset with this pounding pattern. Like many of the beats on this disc, syncopation plays a major role in its effectiveness. Barker places a snare accent on the offbeat at the end of the second, third, and fourth measures to accentuate the intro's pushed chord changes. (0:00)

"Baby Come On"

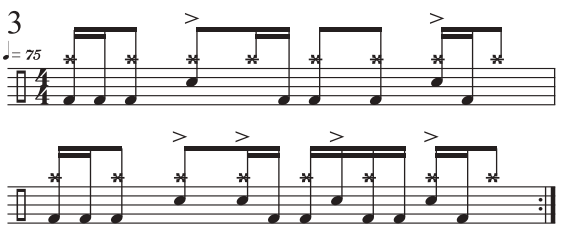
Even though this track moves in half time, Travis's hyper-funky groove and 32nd-note fills provide plenty of energy. In this verse sequence, he's got it all going: ghost notes, open hi-hat accents, and loads of offbeats on the kick and snare. That groove eventually dovetails into an explosive fill, which sets up the song's chorus. (1:18)





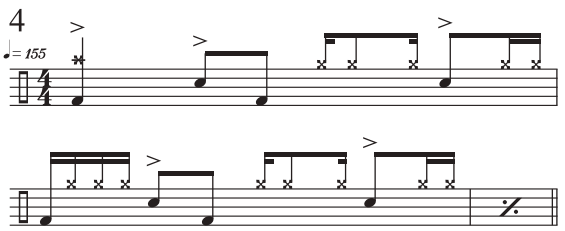
"Little Death"

Travis's heavy two-measure pattern drives the chorus of this slow-paced song. Barker's verse groove is similar to the first measure below. But by changing from the hi-hat to a crash-ride, and by adding extra kick and snare notes, he raises the intensity level of the chorus. (1:03)



"155"

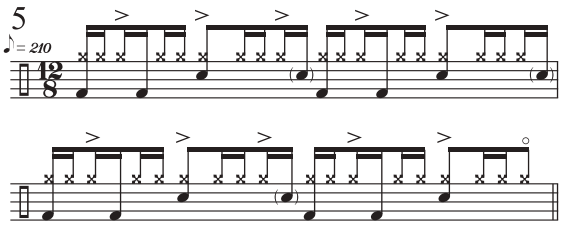
Travis's unique take on a two-handed 16th-note hi-hat groove adds a compelling slant to the dance feel of this track. (0:00)



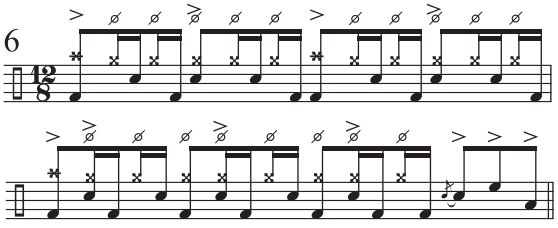
"Lillian"

This great beat shows off the polyrhythmic side of Barker's drumming. By accenting every third hi-hat note, he stamps an

offbeat feel onto a flowing kick and snare groove. The hi-hat pattern notated in Example 5 appears in the left stereo channel, while the right channel contains a contrasting hi-hat overdub that adds to the polyrhythm. (0:37)

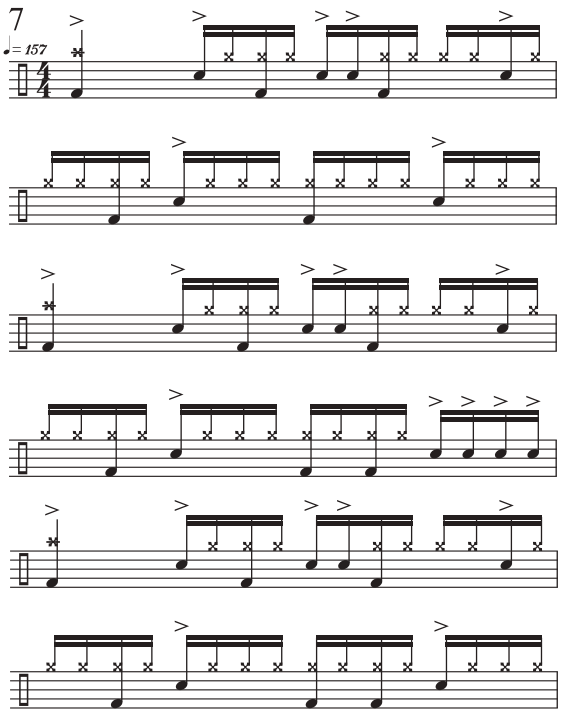


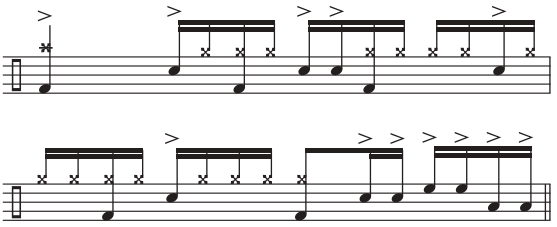
The song' s chorus groove requires a bigger, more syncopated treatment. After switching to straight 8th notes on the hi-hat over a busy kick and snare pattern, Travis keeps the polyrhythms coming with a repetitive kick/snare part at the end of the chorus (measure 2). (1:39)



"Cliffdiving"

Barker chooses another 16th-note hi-hat pattern for this fast song. The 16ths add excitement, but the real attention-grabber in this groove is the syncopated snare and bass drum part. Another nice detail is the alternating ending pattern, which sets up each chord change in the intro. (0:00)



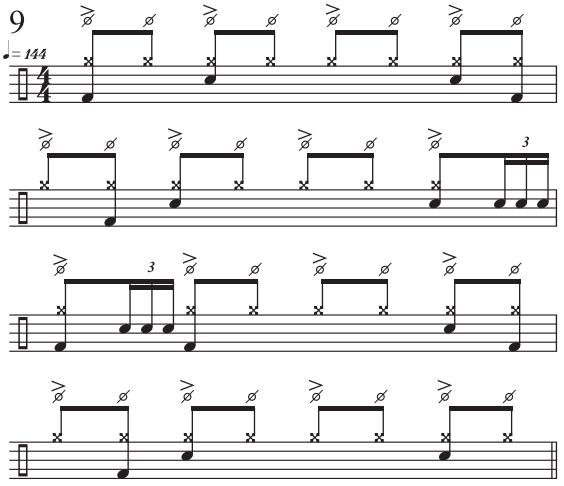


"Weatherman"

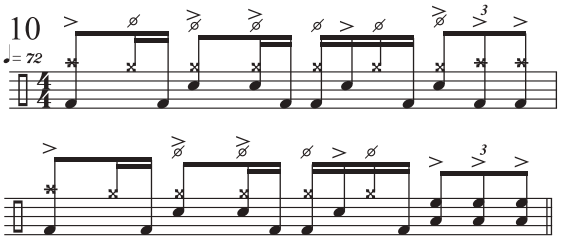
This drum ' n' bass–style groove appears at the very end of the track. The sound is squashed and distant, and the choppy editing makes it clear that it' s a drum loop. But there' s no mistaking that the source sound is Travis' s live drumming, rather than a programmed part. His left-hand snare work is especially noteworthy. (4:19)

"Chapter 13"

Barker chooses to play a sparse beat for the verse of the album' s mid-tempo closer. However, the drummer can' t resist throwing in a pair of flashy ruffs in each verse, reminding you that you' re listening to one of rock' s best technicians. (1:43)



In the song' s half-time bridge section, Barker ends each bar with a cool 8th note–triplet pattern that sets this section apart from the rest of the tune. Travis adds more interest by varying where he places the triplets on the kit. (3:06)



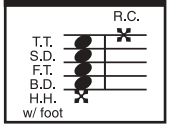
To hear some of these beats, log on to the Education page at www.moderndrummer.com.

The Hi-Hat

Not Just 2 And 4 Anymore

by Steve Hass

MUSIC KEY



American jazz has changed quite a bit in the past thirty years. Putting emphasis on 2 and 4 is still a part of the basic timeline, however, it doesn't always have to be stated on the hi-hat. Today's drummers are using the hi-hat as another voice for improvisation in addition to keeping time.

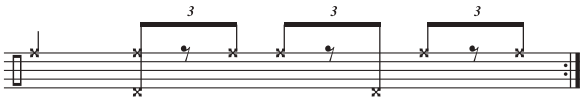
So what happens if we change the timeline a bit? While touring with jazz guitarist John Scofield, I experimented with different hi-hat patterns that extended over four- to sixteen-bar phrases or over an entire thirty-two-measure drum solo. Two of my favorite hi-hat patterns involve playing upbeats and dotted quarter notes. Dotted quarter notes are especially fun because they create an artificial three feel over a straight 4/4 swing pattern.

Basic Patterns

To begin, let's play the swing pattern on the ride with the following left-foot patterns.

1

2



Basic Independence

Now play the figures in Example 3 using the following methods, while playing the previous foot patterns. (Note: Example 2 is a three-bar phrase, therefore it won't resolve evenly every four bars. So count carefully.)

1. Play the figures with the bass drum and left hand separately.
2. Designate everything larger than an 8th note to the bass drum, and 8th notes or lesser note values to the left hand.
3. Come up with your own orchestrations.

3 swing 8ths

Advanced Independence

After you've mastered the previous exercises, try playing the following figures over the left-foot patterns. The objective is to be able to divide more complex figures between the kick and snare so that your left hand and bass drum become fully independent.

4

Improvising

Once you' re comfortable playing basic figures over Examples 1 and 2, try improvising over the left-foot ostinatos within different song forms. I' ve included a short thirty-two-bar solo over the standard tune " If I Were A Bell," which outlines the melody. In a live situation, I don' t play an entire solo using only this concept. Instead, I continue onto other ideas that free up my left foot to be included in the improvisation. As you' re working on these concepts, remember to keep the ride cymbal swinging. Have fun, and let me know your thoughts.

Steve Hass is a versatile drummer who's toured and/or recorded with John Scofield, Ravi Coltrane, Manhattan Transfer, Suzanne Vega, and many others. His debut solo CD *Traveler* is available through his Web site, www.stevehass.net.

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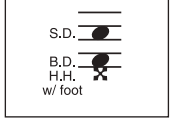
Effective Warm-Ups

Part 3: Flamming The Triplets

by Ari Hoenig

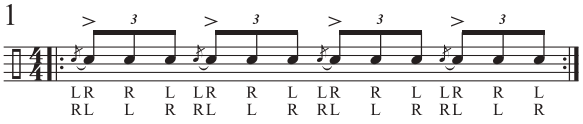
MUSIC KEY



Last time, we looked at some practical applications of flam rudiments. We analyzed different sticking options and chose to use the most practical ones. This month I want to share with you several triplet flam exercises that I use as warm-ups.

Examples 1–3 are skeletal ideas of longer phrases that we' ll be working with later. Master these first. I' ve included two sticking patterns: right- and left-hand lead.

1



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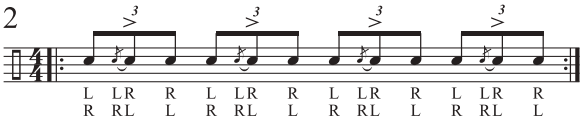
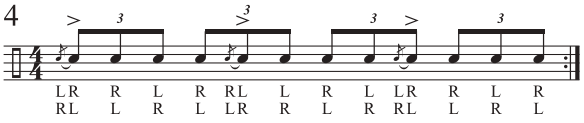


3

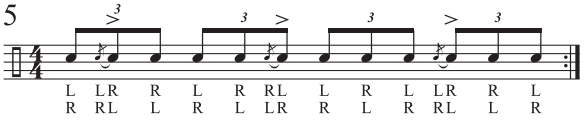
Example 4 is composed of triplets grouped in fours. (For the remainder of the examples, if two stickings are notated, the second one is played on the repeat.)

4



In Examples 5–7, the rhythm is displaced. These variations will help you become comfortable with all parts of the triplet. The second triplet partial tends to be the weakest, as it' s the least often played.

5



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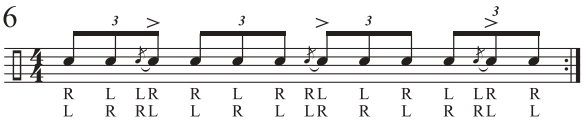

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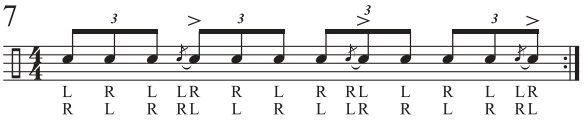
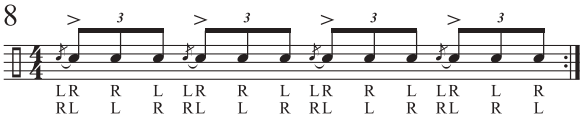


Example 8 is a basic Swiss army–triplet exercise, and Example 9 is the same pattern displaced by an 8th-note triplet.

8



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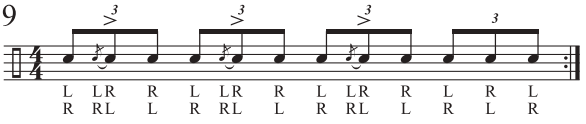
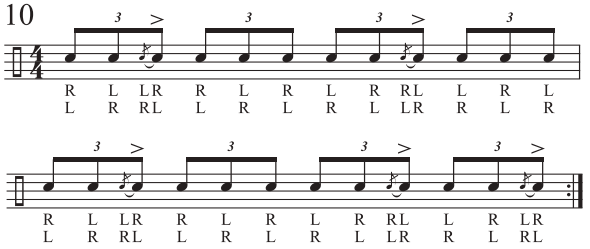


Example 10 emphasizes the third triplet partial.

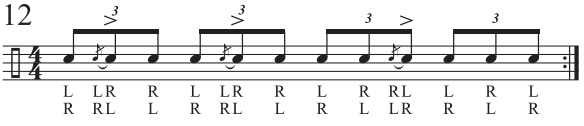
10



In Examples 11 and 12, the flams are outlining consecutive three-, four-, and five-note groupings.

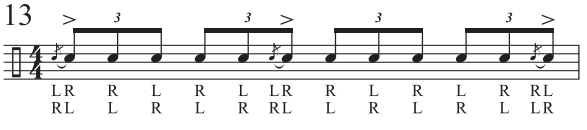
11

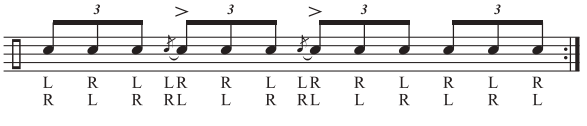
12



Example 13 outlines a clave rhythm, and Example 14 is a similar two-bar idea.

13



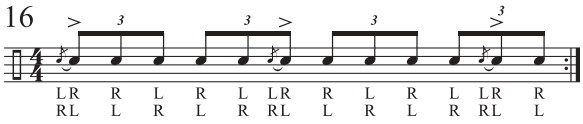


14

Examples 15 and 16 involve two five-note groupings and a grouping of two.

15

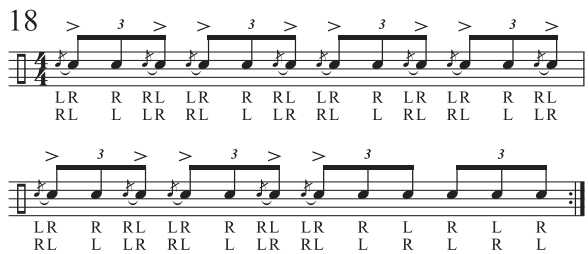
16



Examples 17 and 18 use reverse flams.

17

18



To work on your coordination, try the previous exercises with the following bass drum and hi-hat patterns.

19

20

21

22

Next time, we' ll check out some ways to practice odd groupings using these stickings.

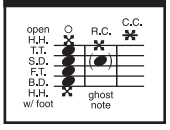
Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Chris Potter, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Ari also leads his own band on Monday nights at New York City jazz club Smalls. His new album, *Inversations,* is available through Dreyfus Records.

The Rhythm Section

Classic Bass And Drum Grooves

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY



Most record producers will agree that a great song starts with a great rhythm track. And the relationship between bass and drums is a crucial element. Classic rhythm sections have always worked closely together to achieve the ultimate groove, sometimes locking note-for-note, other times playing off of each other's patterns.

Let's take a look at a few all-time classic grooves from the perspective of the drums and the bass to see if we can shed light on what made them so magical. Then get with your favorite bass player and give them a try. Maybe they'll help you cook up a little magic of your own! (In each example, the bass part is on the top staff and the drums are on the bottom.)

James Brown, "Cold Sweat, Pt. 1"

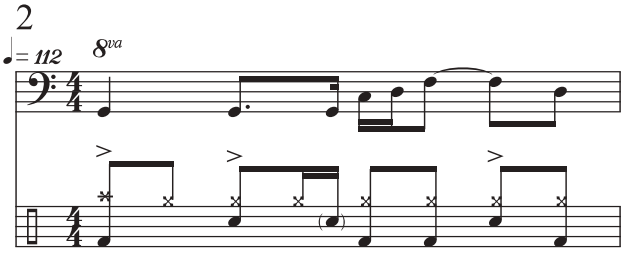
Clyde Stubblefield's much-analyzed beat is only half the story of this beautiful groove. The combination of syncopation and melodic movement in Bernard Odum's bass line completes the picture. Look at how Bernard punctuates Clyde's moved-over snare hit in the fourth beat of the first measure, helping to immortalize a beat that's as famous as one of James Brown's screams. (0:00)

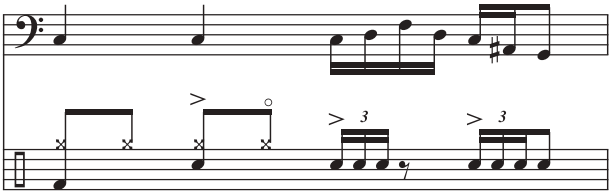
1

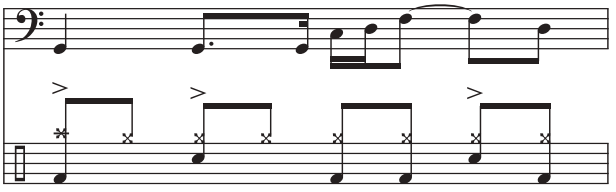
The Beatles, "Rain"

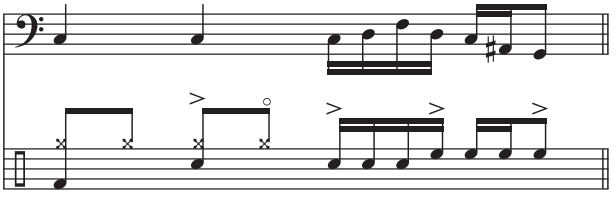
Well known as one of Ringo Starr's finest drum tracks, this is also one of Paul McCartney's best, as he matches Ringo's fills with some bass riffs of his own. Check out how rhythmically locked in they are in the sections between each fill. (0:29)

2









Led Zeppelin, "The Ocean"

Look at the give-and-take in this Led Zeppelin track. John Paul Jones' bass part (accompanied by Jimmy Page's guitar) starts with a simple five-note riff. In the second half of the measure, bass and guitar lay out while John Bonham answers back using subtle ghost notes and two powerful snare accents. Bonham then shifts into support mode in bar 2 while Jones and Page finish the riff. Talk about teamwork! (0:13)

3

Tower Of Power, "What Is Hip?"

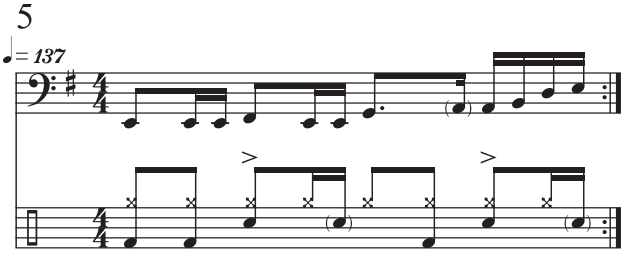
Here's another example of an incredibly tight rhythm section. Rocco Prestia's rapid-fire bass style is the perfect complement to the precision of David Garibaldi's crisp percussive attack. Check out their rhythmic solidarity in the chorus of this Tower Of Power classic. (0:38)

4

Yes, "Roundabout"

Sometimes your job is to groove and stay out of the way, even if you're a rhythm wizard like Bill Bruford. This huge hit from Yes features one of rock's most recognizable bass lines, played by Chris Squire. Bruford's tasteful beat lays the perfect foundation. (0:48)

5



Stevie Wonder, "I Wish"

In this well-loved Stevie Wonder song, Nathan Watts' walking bass line and Raymond Pounds' hi-hat are swinging like a straight jazz tune. But Pounds' kick and snare pattern is nothing short of pure funk. The combination of elements gives this track its timeless appeal. (0:13)

6

Steely Dan, "Peg"

This Steely Dan single contains a terrific bouncy funk groove from bassist Chuck Rainey. Rick Marotta provides extra lift with his swinging, offbeat 16th-note hi-hat pattern. The sense of movement these two players achieve is undeniable. (0:17)

7

The Police, "Driven To Tears"

There are rhythm sections whose turbulent personal relationships bring excitement to their performances. Perhaps that's why Stewart Copeland doesn't seem too concerned about matching any of the details in Sting's bass part for this Police classic. Instead, he provides driving timekeeping (kick drum) and a hint of half-time reggae (rimclick) while improvising with his usual abandon on the bell of his ride cymbal. (0:21)

8

Ed Breckenfeld can be reached through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com. Many thanks to Klem Hayes for the bass transcriptions in this article.

Guitar Center

06

DRUM OFF

THE WORLD'S LARGEST DRUM COMPETITION

GUITAR CENTER CROWNS DANIEL RODRIGUEZ DRUM OFF 2006 CHAMPION

New York's Own Earns Title of Nation's Top Undiscovered Drummer at Grand Finals of World's Largest Drum Competition

In front of today's most influential drummers and a packed house at Hollywood's Music Box @ Fonda Theatre, the nation's top four undiscovered drummers battled it out for glory at Guitar Center's Drum Off 2006 Grand Finals. Though all four were amazing talents, it was 22-year-old Daniel Rodriguez who proved he had the unmatched passion and technique to be hailed as the nation's finest undiscovered drummer. As if the title of Drum Off champion wasn't enough, Rodriguez shared the stage with powerhouse musicians including +44, Stephen Perkins, The Matches, and Street Drum Corps.

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Rodriguez celebrated his victory in typical Hollywood fashion – at a VIP after-party overlooking Hollywood Blvd., where he found himself keeping company with some of the finest drummers in the industry who also happened to be some of the judges for the night's competition. This A-list group of drummers included Adrian Young (No Doubt), Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters), Atom Willard (Angels and Airwaves), Keith Harris (The Roots), Steve Ferrone (Eric Clapton), John Tempesta (The Cult/Rob Zombie), Thomas Lang (Geri Halliwell/Robbie Williams), and ?uestLove (The Roots) who not only judged the battle but also provided the after-party with a DJ set marked by a 2 hour James Brown tribute.

Rodriguez outlasted 4,000 talented competitors throughout the six-month competition. After entering the preliminary competition at his local Guitar Center store in September, Rodriguez advanced to the in-store, district, regional and grand final competitions, proving his excellence in the categories of originality, technique, style, stage presence and overall performance.

The Brooklyn, N.Y., native has been practicing his rolls since he was 5. He first entered Guitar Center's Drum Off in 1999 and came closest to victory in 2004 when he advanced to the Grand Finals. After seven years, Rodriguez's persistence finally paid off as he walked away with the title of Drum Off 2006 champion.

In addition to the coveted title as the nation's top undiscovered drummer, Rodriguez walked away with a 2006 Scion tC, $2,500 Guitar Center shopping spree, Roland V Pro electronic drum kit, custom designed SoBe Adrenaline Rush drum cases, one-year drum and cymbal endorsement deal and thousands of dollars in gear from the industry's top manufacturers.

To see Daniel's winning performance or for more details on Drum Off, visit www.guitarcenter.com

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Non-Drummer Drummers...

And Why They're Great

by Travis Hudelson

Over the years, a number of legendary drummers have stepped away from the drumset, learned to play melodic/harmonic instruments, and produced great work. Stewart Copeland (first in the persona of Klark Kent and later under his own name), Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and the highly underrated Will Rigby (of the dB's and now Steve Earle) all made records where they wrote the material and/or played other instruments.

Drummers approach composing and playing guitar or keyboards differently. And haven't we all had those times when we *knew* a song would work—if we could just get the guitarist to play the part we heard in our minds but couldn't quite describe?

Conversely, we drummers can learn a lot from other musicians who play drums on the side. What better way to understand what's in a songwriter's head and make it come alive than to figure out what some of the greatest musicians on other instruments do when they play drums? Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder, Pete Townshend, Todd Rundgren, Ben Folds, and Marshall Crenshaw have all created unique drum parts on their own records, none of which would have been the same if they'd been played by a "real" drummer. Marvin Gaye played drums on sessions as well as on his own records. Chick Corea is said to be a great drummer who plays almost every day.

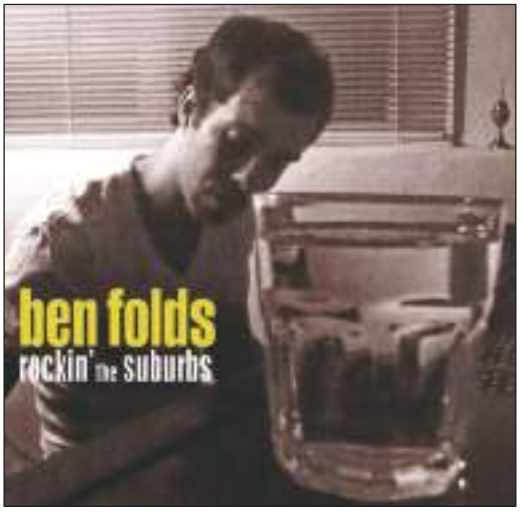
Great Examples

There are dozens of albums out there that exemplify the creativity of non-drummer drummers. Let's look at just a few.

Innervisions is one of Stevie Wonder's greatest records. With a couple of minor exceptions, he played every instrument on it, as well as doing all the male vocal tracks. At the time the album was released in the late 1970s, a lot of "real" drummers criticized the drum tracks as being awkward and sloppy. But Stevie knew what he was doing, and the parts he played contribute to the unique feel of every song. No drummer on earth would have allowed himself to play the hi-hat track on "Golden Lady," which follows a hiccuppy keyboard part and is almost behind the beat. But it fits the song like a glove. The fills are dramatic, stumbling, and perfect. Could anyone but Stevie have come up with this stuff?

In addition to drumming on "Birthday" and a few other tracks on The Beatles' "White" album, Paul McCartney came into his own as a drummer on his self-

Non-drummers don't have two things that most drummers have: technique, and preconceptions of how drums are "supposed" to fit into a given type of song.



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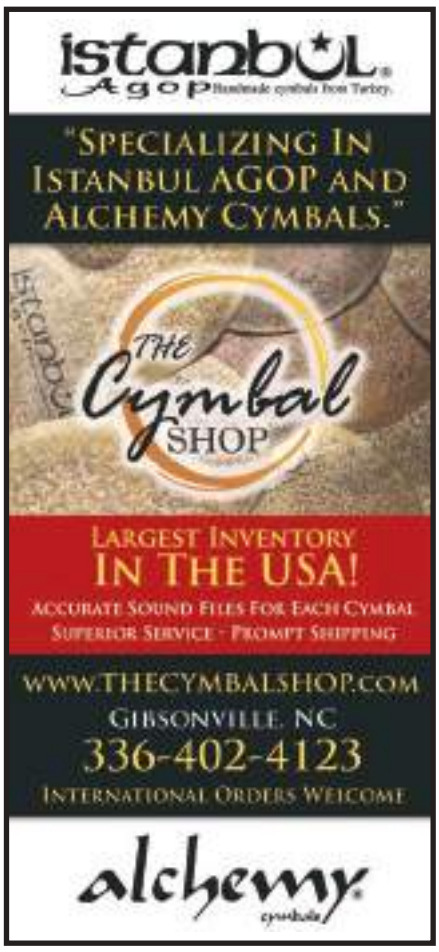


CONCEPTS

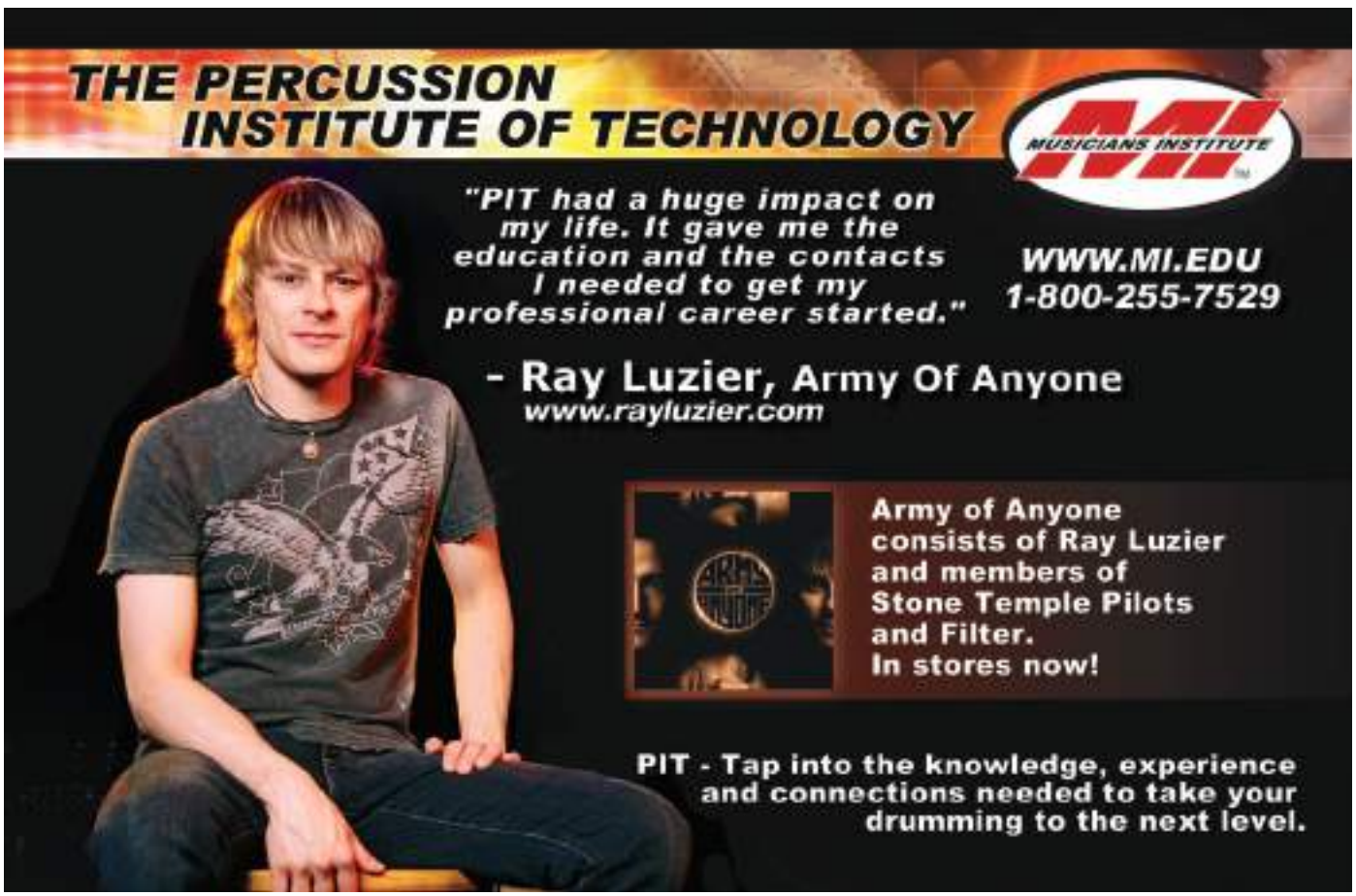
titled, debut solo album. "Ooh You" has a raw intensity that just flows. Would any of us have played as simply as that? Again, the fills stutter along—but there's something to be said for a total lack of smoothness in the right places.

One of the first "one-man band" records was *Something/Anything* by Todd Rundgren. Although Todd did have able musical assistance on side 4 of this double record, sides 1, 2, and 3 feature him playing all the instruments, including drums. A couple of the brilliant "oddities" that Todd plays include the reverse hi-hat/ride cymbal arrangement on "I Saw The Light," and the perfectly imperfect fill just before the three-minute mark on "Couldn't I Just Tell You?" Todd also knows when *not* to do his own drumming; he has consistently chosen unique drummers for his own records and those he produces (Hunt Sales, Prairie Prince, John "Willie" Wilcox, Kenny Aronoff, and Max Weinberg, among others).

Fast forward to this century and check out Ben Folds on *Rockin' The Suburbs*. Many see Ben as a descendant of Elton John crossed with Todd Rundgren. The Ben Folds Five had a great drummer in Darren Jessee. But on this record Ben played virtually everything except the string parts, displaying a mastery of not just drums but overall rhythm-section playing. Ben is actually a "better" drummer than either McCartney or Stevie, and his playing is closer to what a session player would typically do. "Annie Waits" has a great hook, and the drums play beautiful rolling fills—solid, clean, and with a lot of finesse.

Vive La Difference

Non-drummers don't have two things that most drummers have: technique, and preconceptions of how drums are "supposed" to fit into a given type of song. We can debate what technique does and doesn't do for us as players, but it's undeniable that a *lack* of technique forces one to be resourceful. When coming up with a drum track for a song, a non-drummer is likely to focus on the essence of that song. And isn't that what we *all* should do?



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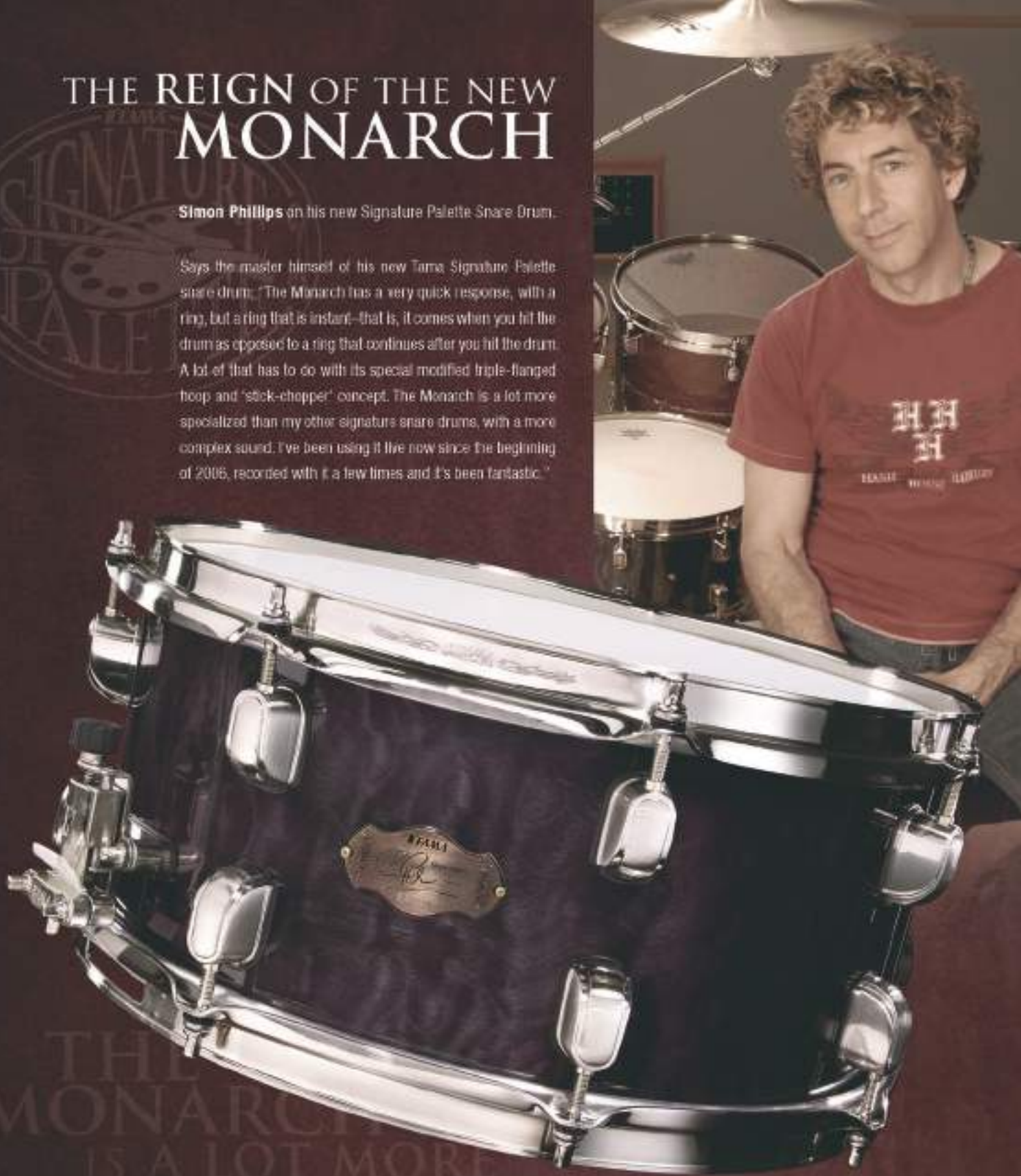

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Love, (Drumming For) Janis

A Tale Of Two Daves

by Robin Tolleson

Love, Janis is a spirited look back at the music and tragically short life of singer Janis Joplin. The show recently completed a four-month run at the Marines Memorial Theatre in San Francisco. Playing the role of Joplin's drummer on such classic tracks as "Piece Of My Heart," "Down On Me," and "I Need A Man To Love" was veteran Bay Area drummer David Rokeach.

*MD had the o*pportunity to talk with Rokeach, as well as with the original drummer in the band that launched Joplin's career—Big Brother & The Holding Company's Dave Getz. The discussion touched on the current show, as well as on how the great music it contains was created in the first place.

Love, Janis drummer Dave Rokeach (left) and original Big Brother & The Holding Company drummer Dave Getz

Re-Creating An Original

Dave Getz initially had mixed feelings about the show. "It's seeing our music and the parts that we created being appropriated," says Dave. "In one way it's good, because it keeps that music alive. But in another sense it's sort of competition, because Big Brother is still touring as a band. When [original Big Brother guitarist] Sam Andrew became the show's musical director, things got even more difficult, because it kind of legitimized the show. But when Dave Rokeach got the gig, he called me and suggested that we get together and talk about the music. So then I felt a little differently. I've seen the show twice now, and it's really enjoyable."

Rokeach, whose credits include Ray Charles, Charles Musslewhite, Calvin Keys, Joe Beck, and Tony and Merle Saunders, took *Love, Janis* seriously. Besides consulting with Getz, he studied the drumming of Kozmic Blues Band drummer Maury Baker and Full Tilt Boogie Band drummer Clark Pierson, who played with Janis later in her career.

"Clark played perfectly on 'Bobby McGee,'" says Rokeach, "but that stuff wasn't really groundbreaking like the Big Brother stuff. Their *Cheap Thrills* was a classic record. Big Brother had everything that made a band great in those days. They had great material, and they improvised. They had the blues thing and the psychedelia, and they had a bit of a jazz influence, so *nobody* sounded like them. That's how we wanted to play when we were kids.

"Dave Getz played great drums with Big Brother," Rokeach continues. "There was a little bit of jazz in his playing, along with a great groove and a whole lot of feeling. He didn't play too much; he just played all the right stuff. Like 'Piece Of My Heart' ...I can't think of any way to play that song other than the way Dave played it."

Dave Getz recalls, "No one ever told anybody else what to play. Someone would come in with an idea, and then everybody would make up what they thought was the appropriate part. It was a creative process that sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. But we each had a lot of freedom."

A Meeting Of The Minds

Rokeach and Getz met in 2002 when Getz attended Jazz Camp West, where Rokeach was an instructor. "When I found out he was in my class, I freaked out," Rokeach says. "I brought in the *Cheap Thrills* album and had him get up in front of the class and play the 'Piece Of My Heart' beat. This guy's a part of rock 'n' roll history."

The two Daves have been friends ever since, and when Rokeach got the gig in *Love, Janis*, he sought Getz's help on the drum parts. "Sam Andrew wanted us to get into the spirit of what they did in Big Brother, but to play it our own way,"

Dave Rokeach on stage

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"One of the reasons playing in *Love, Janis* is so much fun is that we're *supposed* to play some stuff. Back in the '60s the right thing for the song was for the drummer to play a bit more."

Dave Rokeach

Rokeach explains. "But I loved what Dave did on 'Piece Of My Heart' so much that I really wanted to get it as close as possible. And some of that stuff was really hard to hear because of the way things were recorded back then."

Dave backstage with Katrina Chester (left), daughter of famed drummer Gary Chester and Morgan Hallet, who jointly portrayed Janis Joplin in the San Francisco show.

"That's actually an Appalachian folk song that was first recorded in the 1930s," says Getz. "Big Brother was doing it before Janis joined the band. We created the arrangement, and I created that drum fill idea. When Janis came into the band, she knew the song. She just modified the words to suit what she wanted to say."

Doing The Right Thing

The drum fill Getz played on "Down On Me" (also from *Cheap Thrills*) is like a musical hook. Although Rokeach transcribed the original drum part for 'Down On Me' note for note, Getz informed him that he doesn't play the part that way any more. "I'm much looser with it now," Getz reveals. "I probably couldn't even play those exact things. I told Dave that I didn't think he had to play those drum fills the way I played them. But he said, 'No, I really want to be authentic.' And when I heard him play that song at the show, it sounded so much better! It was essentially the same phrasing. But with the sound of the drums through the sound system, and the way Dave played it—his touch—compared to the way I played it back in 1966, it really sounded good. So he was right."

Rokeach adds, "To a lot of us who have those recordings burned into our brains, those fills are part of the composition. Another great

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example is ' I Need A Man To Love.' It' s one of my favorite things that Dave Getz plays, and we do an edited version in the show. It' s kind of a Stax groove, but there' s all this psychedelic guitar. During the guitar solo Dave played in unison with the guitar on the snare drum. If you were to do that in a pop tune nowadays it wouldn' t be appropriate, but it sounds *so* cool.

" One of the reasons playing in *Love, Janis* is so much fun is that we' re *supposed* to play some stuff," Rokeach says. " In pop music later on, the drums became more simplified. But back in the late ' 60s the right thing for the song was for the drummer to play a bit more. There' s a whole lot of dynamics, and you feel like the drums have a pretty important voice in the music. For example, on the second bar of each chorus on ' Summertime,' they kind of stop the time, and Dave Getz plays half notes on the ride cymbal, like a Count Basie thing. I didn' t realize that until Dave pointed it out. A lot of rock bands weren' t doing stuff like that.

" If you listen to the original recording of ' Bye Bye Baby,' " Rokeach adds, " it' s kind of a swing tune that goes to a rumba beat, and then they go to a waltz off the quarter-note triplet, kind of like The Beatles in ' We Can Work It Out.' And this was pop music of the day. Anything could happen."

The First Jam Bands

Big Brother came up in a day when all the best bands did a bit of jamming. " When Janis joined Big Brother, we had to make things more concise," Getz recalls. " But in the early days, our audiences loved it when

we' d start with ' In The Hall Of The Mountain King' from the *Peer Gynt Suite* by Greig, and then go into ten minutes of modal jamming. We also had a thing called ' Electric Caravan,' where I' d start an up-tempo Bo Diddley beat, and they' d jam for ten minutes."

Getz has been doing dates with Big Brother since the band re-formed in 1987, but he doesn' t play the tunes exactly like he did in 1966. " People ask me about that all the time, and I always respond that I created the parts, so I don' t feel like I have to copy myself. I can do whatever I want with it, I own it. I don' t get too far out, but I feel I have the liberty to do that."

Dave Rokeach smiles at Getz' s statement, and expresses a bit of envy. " When Dave Getz plays with Big Brother today, he still gets to stretch out," Rokeach says. " What we' re doing with *Love, Janis* is theatre. We need to *sound* like we' re stretching out, but in actuality every song is about the same length every time. Still, I believe we' re offering our audiences the next best thing to a time-warp back to the ' 60s."

For information about Dave Getz and Big Brother & The Holding Company, go to www.bbhc.com.

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A Sparkling Treasure

by Harry Cangany

When I was a kid, there was a segment on the *Rocky & Bullwinkle* TV show that featured a time-traveling dog named Mr. Peabody and his boy Sherman. Together they went back in time to visit famous people, by means of the "Wayback Machine."

This month's drumset makes me feel as though I was able to take Sherman's place, kick out Peabody, and bring back a brand-new 1964 Rogers Citation drumkit. Rogers had two series of drums: the professional Holidays, like these drums, and the less expensive Tower series. Both used the same Keller shells, but Tower drums had center-mounted lugs and a small snare strainer.

The most popular Rogers finishes in the Cleveland manufacturing era (also known as pre-CBS) were white marine, black diamond, blue sparkle, red sparkle, and this month's selection: silver sparkle. There are green and gold sparkle sets out there as well. (Always inspect gold sparkle drums carefully, as some of them tend to "freckle" and discolor from mold.)

Drum collector Ryan Payne found this set and told me about its unique history. In a nutshell: A nice Hoosier named Bob Englar purchased three original Cleveland-era Rogers drums in 1964. He played them for only a year, and then put them away. Bob's recent retirement and a decision to scale down on memorabilia got the set out of the closet and onto the vintage marketplace.

Bob had originally used the kit as a three-piece, with a 14x20 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom, and a wood-shell Powertone snare drum. The bass drum is fitted with a Swiv-o-Matic disappearing cymbal arm. Those drums were called a Viking set. All it needed was a 14" floor tom to become a Louie Bellson Citation model.

For some reason, Rogers silver sparkle (which is really glitter, and which is also used on vintage Gretsch drums) seems to be "on fire" now. Prices for drums with that finish are increasing regularly, which brings me to the quest for the elusive matching 14x14 floor tom.

That quest was hampered by two problems. First, Rogers didn't make that many 14s. Their most popular sets were the Headliner (20"/12"/16") and the Celebrity (22"/13"/16"). As an aside, my advice to collectors has always been to buy every 14x14 floor tom and 4x14 snare drum you can find. They never go out of style, and they act just like money in the bank.

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The Grand Prize is the complete drumset used by Mike on disc 2 of the Hudson Music "In Constant Motion DVD, including: Tama "Mirage Black Ice" 20˝x22˝ bass drum, 7˝x8˝, 8˝x10˝ and 9˝x12˝ rack toms, 12˝x14˝ and 14˝x16˝ floor toms, 5˝x12˝ Steel and 5.5˝x14˝ Maple "Melody Master" Limited Edition MP Signature snare drums, Iron Cobra double bass drum pedal and hi-hat, RoadPro snare and cymbal and tom stands; Sabian 7˝ Radia cup chime, 7˝, 9˝ and 11˝ MP Signature Max Spashes, Low and Mid MP Signature Max Stax, 14˝ HHX Groove hi-hats, 16˝ HHX Extreme crash, 18˝ HHX chinese, 17˝ AA medium crash, 19˝ HH thin crash, 20˝ HH chinese and 22˝ HH Rock ride; Remo Pinstripe batter and Ambassador clear resonant heads on toms and bass drum, Coated CS and Ambassador snare heads on snare drums; Pro-Mark #TX420N MP Autograph drumsticks. The total retail value of this kit is over $15,000.

MIKE PORTNOY "IN CONSTANT MOTION" CONTEST PRIZES

	Grand Prize	1st Prize (x1)	2nd Prize (x3)	3rd Prize (x10)
Tama Drums	Mirage "In Constant Motion" Drumkit	12˝ and 14˝ "Melody Master" Snare Drums	12˝ Steel "Melody Master" Snare Drum	
Sabian Cymbals	"In Contast Motion" Cymbal Set	HHX Performance Set	Mike Portnoy Mid Max Stax	
Remo Drumheads	Complete set of heads for ICM Kit	Complete Head Set (7-pc.)	Pinstripe Pro-Pack and PowerSonic BD Heads	PowerSonic BD Head
Pro-Mark Sticks	12 pair MP Autograph Drumsticks	12 pair MP Autograph Drumsticks	12 pair MP Autograph Drumsticks	6 pair MP Autograph Drumsticks #TX420N
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Hudson Music	Signed copy of "In Constant Motion" DVD	Signed copy of "In Constant Motion" DVD	Signed copy of "In Constant Motion" DVD	Signed copy of "In Constant Motion" DVD

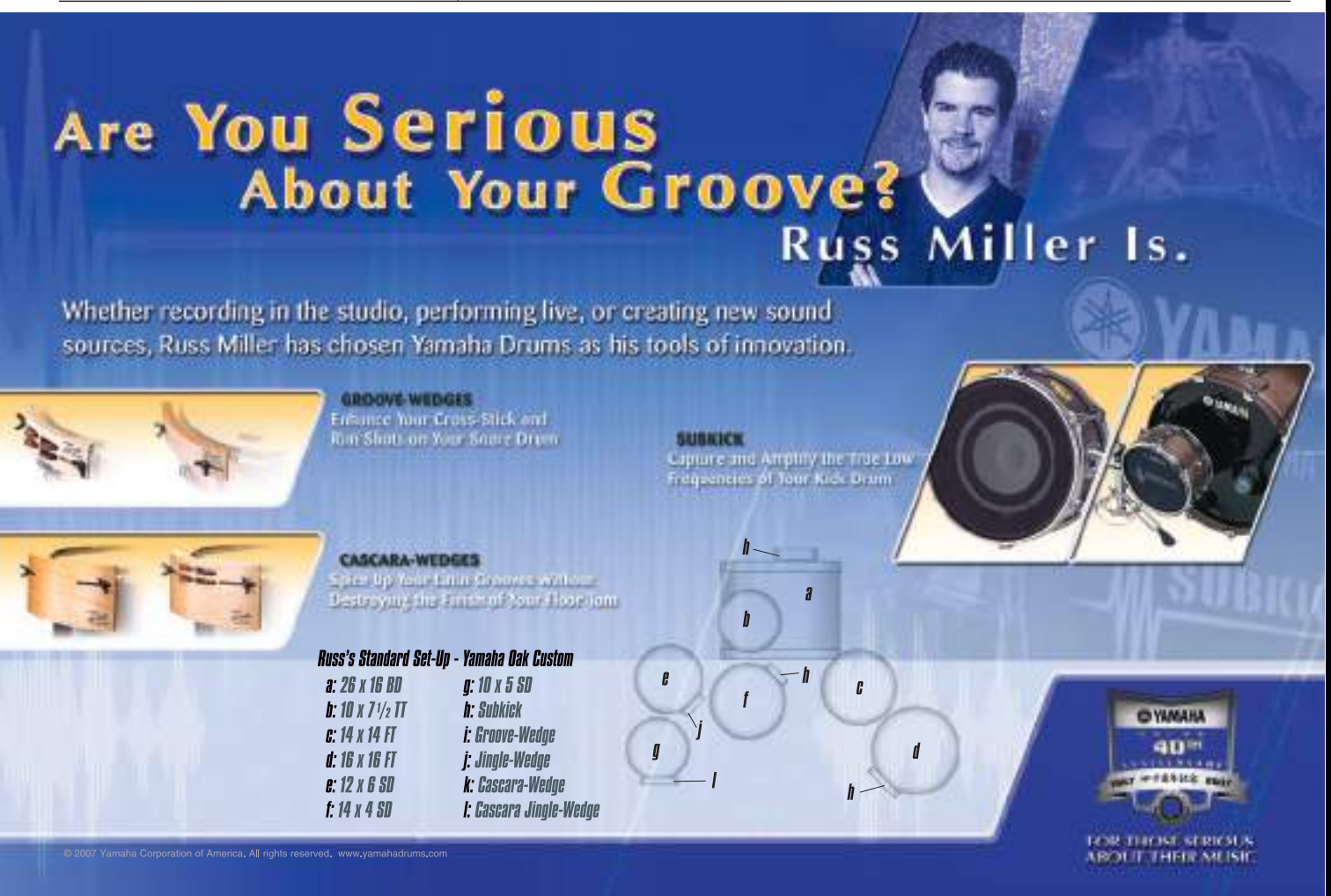
Enter online at tama.com, sabian.com, promark.com, remo.com or hudsonmusic.com. No purchase necessary, void where prohibited. Entries accepted from March 1 to May 31, 2007.
To enter by mail or for a complete list of rules and prizes send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: In Constant Motion Contest, c/o Hudson Music, PO Box 270, Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

The quest' s second problem was the number of shades and particle sizes of Rogers silver sparkle. Cleveland-era drums tend to have small particles, with a blue background. Dayton-era drums tend to have larger particles, with a yellow cast. Fullerton-era (CBS ownership) drums look darker, like pewter. Try to match up a set of Rogers drums and you' ll see what I mean. Many eBay listings describe how someone gave up matching, or describe sets for sale with drums that don' t exactly match. (Rogers also had problems matching black diamond singles.)

Given all of the above, I have to say that collector/dealer Rich King (who can find anything) had the most pristine silver sparkle 14" floor tom that I' ve ever seen. As I look at the bass drum and the two toms, I can see that the floor tom is still a little lighter in color. But my concern for the difference seems to be fading as my enthusiasm for the kit increases.

I would value this stellar set (with a wood-shell Powertone snare) at almost $3,000. You just can' t beat pristine, and imagine how great the glitter looks under stage lights. Man, this is show business!



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overheads (live) **CX112 x 2**

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IRON MAIDEN's NICKO McBRAIN

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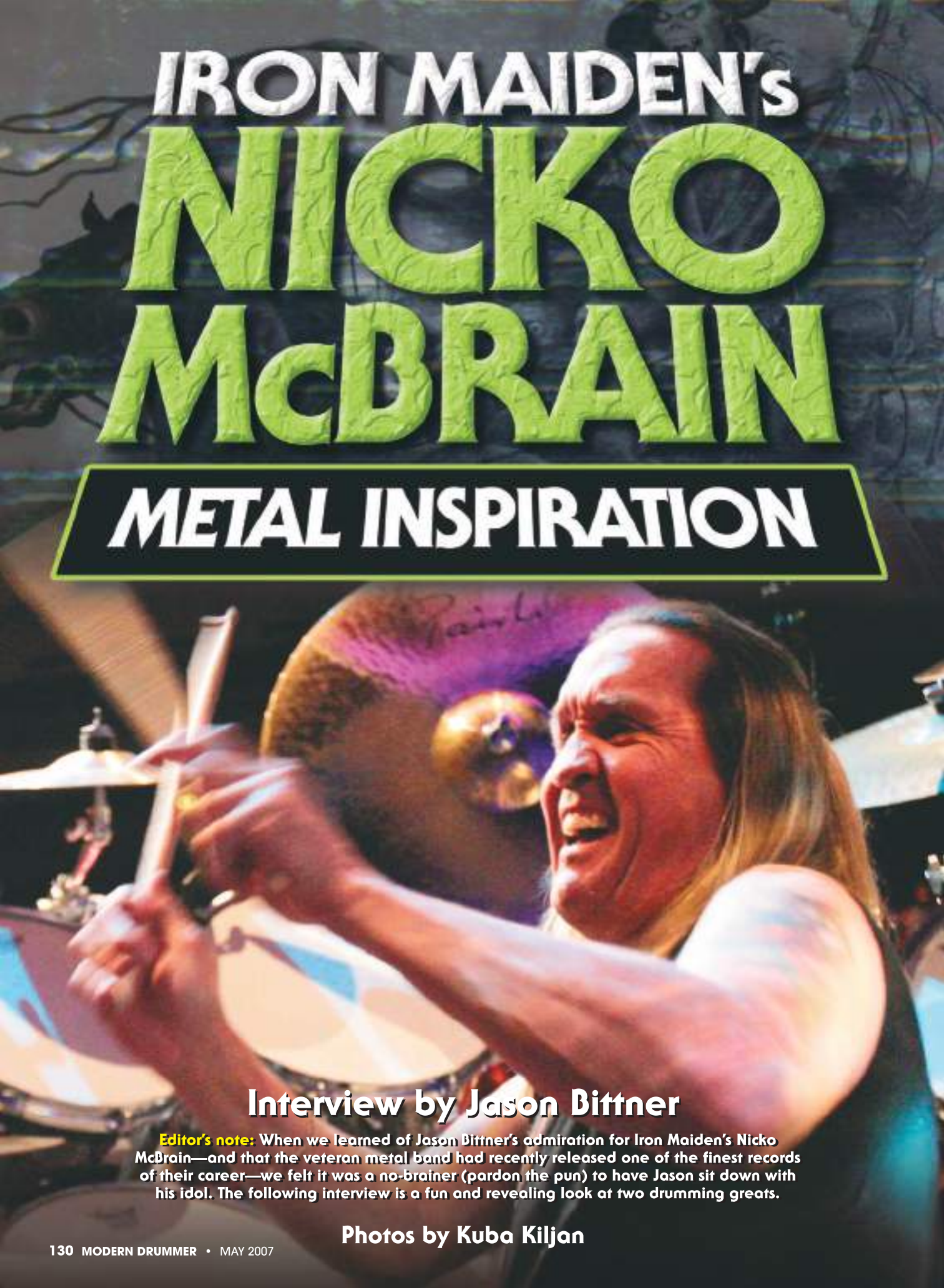


Interview by Jason Bittner

Editor's note: When we learned of Jason Bittner's admiration for Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain—and that the veteran metal band had recently released one of the finest records of their career—we felt it was a no-brainer (pardon the pun) to have Jason sit down with his idol. The following interview is a fun and revealing look at two drumming greats.

Photos by Kuba Kiljan

In the summer of 1981, as I sat mindlessly surfing the television at my grandmother's home, I accidentally found a new station that wasn't there the day before. The station was called MTV, and the third music video I saw on that day was by a band named Iron Maiden. That day changed my life forever. Two years later, after the departure of Maiden's original (as far as recordings go) drummer, Clive Burr, the man that would fill his shoes would also inspire legions of drummers for years to come. That man was Michael Henry McBrain—known to all as Nicko. Today, almost twenty-five-years later, he's *still* providing Maiden's thunderous beats.

For those who may not be familiar with this man's body of work, Nicko first rose to prominence in the 1970s playing with guitar great Pat Travers, then moving on to the French band Trust, original composers of the 1989 Anthrax hit "Anti-Social." Nicko joined Iron Maiden in 1982, in time to record their classic album *Piece Of Mind*. A metal masterpiece, *Piece Of Mind* begins with one of the greatest metal drum fills of all time on the tune "Where Eagles Dare." From start to finish the album suggests that Nicko had something to prove—and prove it he did. Bombastic fills, thunderous toms, lightning *single bass* work, and an amazing sense of humor and grace is what this man is all about.

In October of 2006, Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy and I journeyed to Camden, New Jersey to see Iron Maiden during the first week of their *Matter Of Life And Death* tour. This tour marks the first time Iron Maiden has ever performed a complete album in its entirety in a live setting. *A Matter Of Life And Death* is a Maiden lover's dream—epic songwriting, wailing guitars, and a stellar performance by Mr. McBrain.

Knowing how I felt about Nicko and his playing, *Modern Drummer* editor in chief Bill Miller thought it would be a great idea for me to interview Nicko for *MD*, and I agreed. Since schedules were tight, the always-gentlemanly drum great gave us his last thirty minutes of free time before he headed to the stage to perform their two-hour set. (Thankfully, we were able to follow up with him later with more questions. Thank you, Nicko!) In the next few pages, *MD* invites you to get a little insight into what exactly makes this great man tick. And by the way, Nicko, what happened to the Speed Kings?

Jason: We' re here with the mighty Nicko McBrain. First off, it' s an honor to sit here and do this with you.

Nicko: Thank you.

Jason: I haven' t seen you in over a year now, since Drummer Live in London.

Nicko: That was good fun. As you know, since I saw you last, Iron Maiden rehearsed and recorded a new album, A Matter Of Life And Death. And now we' re on tour, promoting it. We' re not really promoting it, actually. We' re out having a good time—any excuse to get on stage! We have a monstrously phenomenal stage sound.

Jason: And you' re selling out all over the place.

Nicko: It' s selling out, and it' s quite historic for us for two reasons. One is that we' ve never performed an entire album live.

Jason: If I recall correctly, you guys came close with the Brave New Worldtour.

Nicko: I think we did six tunes off that record. So that was two-thirds of the album. But for this one we decided there really wasn' t anything we could leave out. Frankly, the material is so strong that we were convinced that we' d be performing it on tour in its entirety.

The second historical thing about this tour is we' ve sold out virtually every US gig prior to us going out. And, of course, Europe is definitely very strong for us.

Jason: Speaking of the new album, what makes this record stand out for you, drum-wise?

Nicko: Ah, certainly the drum sound. I' m very happy with it. We used the same studio where we recorded Dance Of Death,so Kevin [Shirley, producer] was very familiar with the room and where he wanted to place the mic' s around it. I also brought my old Ludwig Supraphonic 402 out of retirement for the album.

Jason: Ah..thesnare drum.

Nicko: Yeah.

Jason: Did you bring the ol' Speed King [pedal] out of retirement too?

Nicko: You know what—I can' t find any of ' em! I' ve got my drumtech looking in all the boxes in the warehouse. I know I must have had fifteen or twenty of them at one time. I had loads of ' em.

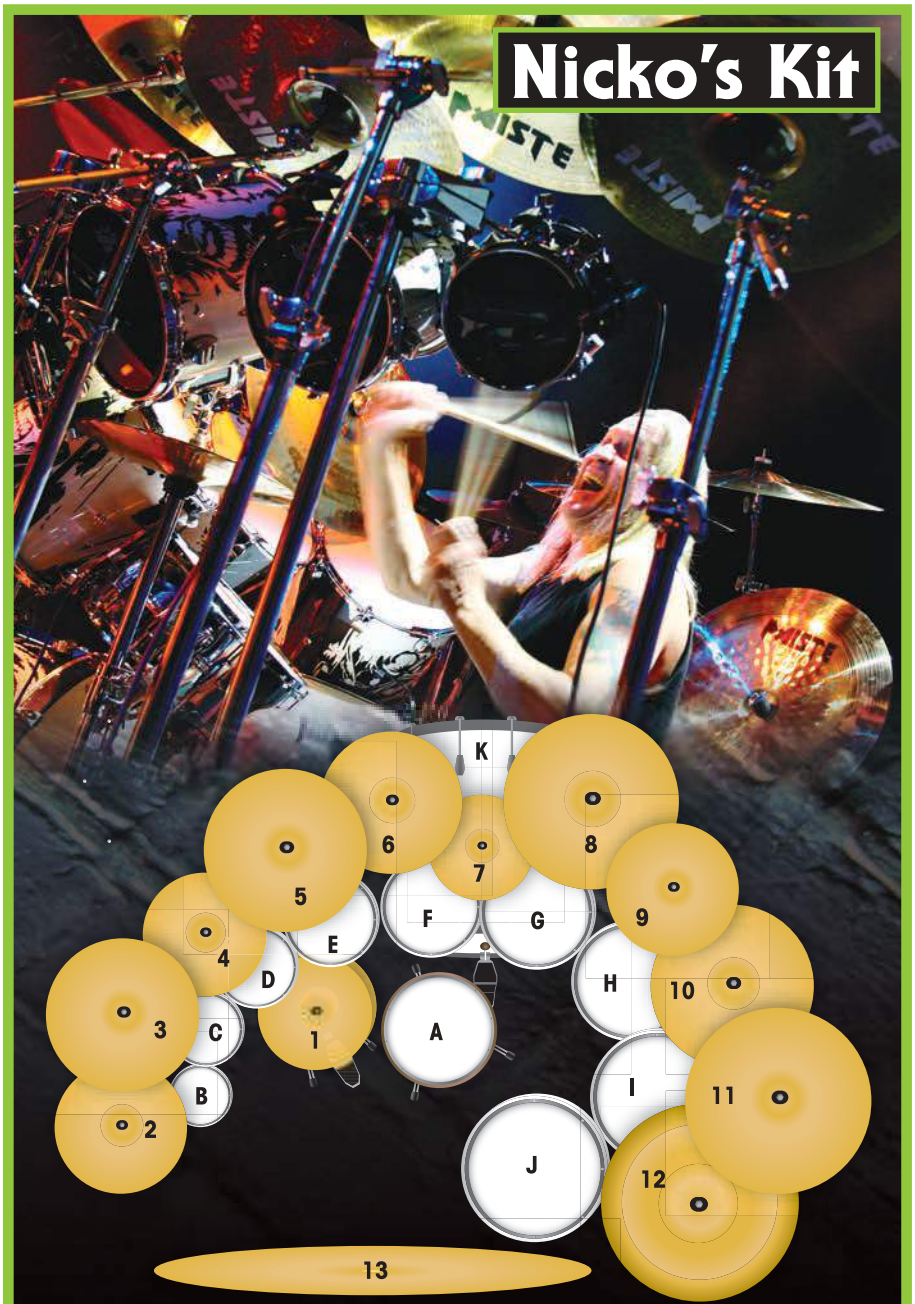
So I brought the snare out, and I knew from past experience that it records very well. I was really excited to bring it out, and we got a great snare sound immediately. I was like, " Why did I retire this drum?" Anyway, that drum is on the road with us now, too.

The way that this record came together was different from what we' ve done in the past, where the guys would have a distinct, special rhythm they' d want me to play. That didn' t happen so much on this record. I had more freedom, and I kind of approached it where I felt it was more musical. My drumming on this album suits the songs, rather than just kind of, " I' ll just put a drum feel here, I' ll do this here, I' ll do that there, and I' ll get the old 16ths going on the bass drum." There' s not one track on this album where that happens. My friends asked, " Why haven' t you got more bass drum on here?" And I said, " Well, I didn' t want to do that. I do that all the time. Besides, the music doesn' t really need it."

Jason: It' s like me with double bass. I don' t need to put double bass on every song on every album, because I' ve done it before.

Nicko: Exactly I pretty much had free rein regarding how to approach the drum tracks. For instance, there' s a track called " Lord Of Light," where it breaks down and there' s this little triplet before the solo section of the song. When he wrote it, Adrian Smith [guitar] had a double bass drum part in mind, a phenomenal part for this particular section of the song. He said, " You can do that, can' t you?" And I said, " No." He said, " Yeah, but you did the double bass drum on the last album." I said, " Yeah, that was straight 16ths." I could deal with that. This is actually a rhythm with the feet. I said, " I' m not going to do that. Let me come up with something to work around it." So that' s where that rhythm came from, from his double bass part.

Nicko's Kit



Drums: Premier Series in custom finish
A. 6½x14 Ludwig Supraphonic 402 snare
B. 6x6 tom
C. 8x8 tom
D. 10x10 tom
E. 12x12 tom
F. 13x13 tom
G. 14x14 tom
H. 15x15 tom
I. 16x16 tom
J. 16x18 floor tom
K. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 14" hi-hat (Signature heavy top, Sound Edge bottom)
2. 17" Rude crash-ride
3. 19" Signature Power crash
4. 16" Rude crash-ride
5. 20" Signature crash
6. 18" Signature Power crash
7. 13" Formula 602 heavy bell
8. 22" Sound Creation bell ride
9. 17" Rude crash-ride
10. 20" Signature crash
11. 22" Signature crash
12. 22" Signature heavy China
13. 40" symphonic gong

Hardware: Premier 6000 stands, DW 5000 Accelerator bass drum pedal
Heads: various Remo models
Sticks: Shaw Sticks Boomer model (Nicko McBrain signature)

Jason: Did you approach the drums any differently on this album from the previous one? Bruce [Dickinson, vocalist] has commented a lot about how well you played on this record. The moment I heard the opening track, it was almost as if I knew what fills you were going to play, because I' m so familiar with your style.

Nicko: So you' re after my gig! [laughs]

Jason: No, I could never take your gig. No way. But I was going to ask you, my favorite songs off the record so far are "Different World," "The Pilgrim," and "For The Greater Love Of God." What are your favorites?

Nicko: Well, they' re all my favorites. But to play "Lord Of Light" live has been my favorite since we recorded it. The main reason I love it is because of the "progressiveness" of the track. It' s something that takes me back to when I was a teenager and the kind of music I was playing at the time, which was prog rock or prog blues.

Jason: It' s epic Iron Maiden to me.

Nicko: It is. The great thing about that track is the playing. Everybody is just absolutely phenomenal on it. Live, "Longest Day" and "Greater Good" are so much on the back end of the beat, which is different for us. Iron Maiden is known for pushing the feel and playing on the front edge of the meter. This album is actually so extreme it' s almost falling out of time on the back end of things.

This record is also very feel-oriented, and to emulate it live is quite a challenge, because the tempos of the songs are quite important. They have to be within a parameter of five or ten beats per minute. We can' t move the tempo around.

We played "Out Of The Shadows" last night, which is the ballad on the album. It was immense last night. It' s funny because it' s so big, but it' s a breather song for me because I' d just done five high-energy songs back to back. "Please, guys can you give me a break? Bruce, say something to the kids." [laughs] "Shadows" is about 80 bpm—I mean, c' mon, an Iron Maiden song that' s 80 bpm? That' s like a third of what we normally play.

Jason: This is what I want to get into with you. I hear some different kind of beats on this new CD. And I hear some newer-sounding metal from you guys, I mean more like the newer kind of stuff that' s coming out these days. I came to your show with Mike Portnoy, and I said to him, "Dude, they' ve got Dream Theater riffs on this record!"

Nicko: You' re talking about the track "Legacy."

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Jason: Here' s my question: Would it be safe to say that you guys still have your finger on the pulse of metal?

Nicko: Well, yeah. I think what you' ve got to understand is, most of what this album is about is life experience. It' s things that have happened in the world, and the style of the writing is about observation and life experiences. For instance, one of your favorite tracks, " The Pilgrim," is a classic example. When we were working on the tune, I got to the chorus and thought, " Ah, my tribute to John Bonham." It' s that classic Bonham beat.

So for me, the music on this record is about our life experience, along with having our finger on the pulse of metal. This is why this record means so much to me, because it' s like a lot of what I grew up with.

I' ve got to tell you this story: We had just finished doing " Legacy," and guess who walks into the studio? Jimmy Page! He came in to see Kevin. Jimmy walked through the door, and I went, " Jimmy! Oh, what' s happening?" Led Zeppelin did " Stairway To Heaven" in the studio we were recording in. I asked him, " This place brings back a few memories, doesn' t it?" He said, " Yeah, don' t it just?" I said, " You' re going to love the track we just did. It' s my tribute to Bonham." He said, " Really?" I said, " Yeah, we just finished it. You' ve got to go and have a listen." What a coincidence. I just finished my tribute to Bonham and Jimmy Page walks in!

Jason: That' s awesome. I' d like to switch gears and talk about your setup. How did it evolve into the multi-tom setup you play, which you' ve been using for a long time? Also, if they made an 11" and a 17" tom, would you fit them in?

Nicko: Ha! [laughs] Yeah, you know what I' d do? I' d get rid of the 6" and 8". Listen, I can' t get ' round to the 6 anymore. It' s so small, I actually have to think about playing it. [laughs]

Jason: And you can throw out your back reaching over to hit it.

Nicko: [laughs] That kit evolved in late 1976 when I joined Pat Travers. At the time I actually had a five-piece kit that I added three Staccato tom-toms on top of.

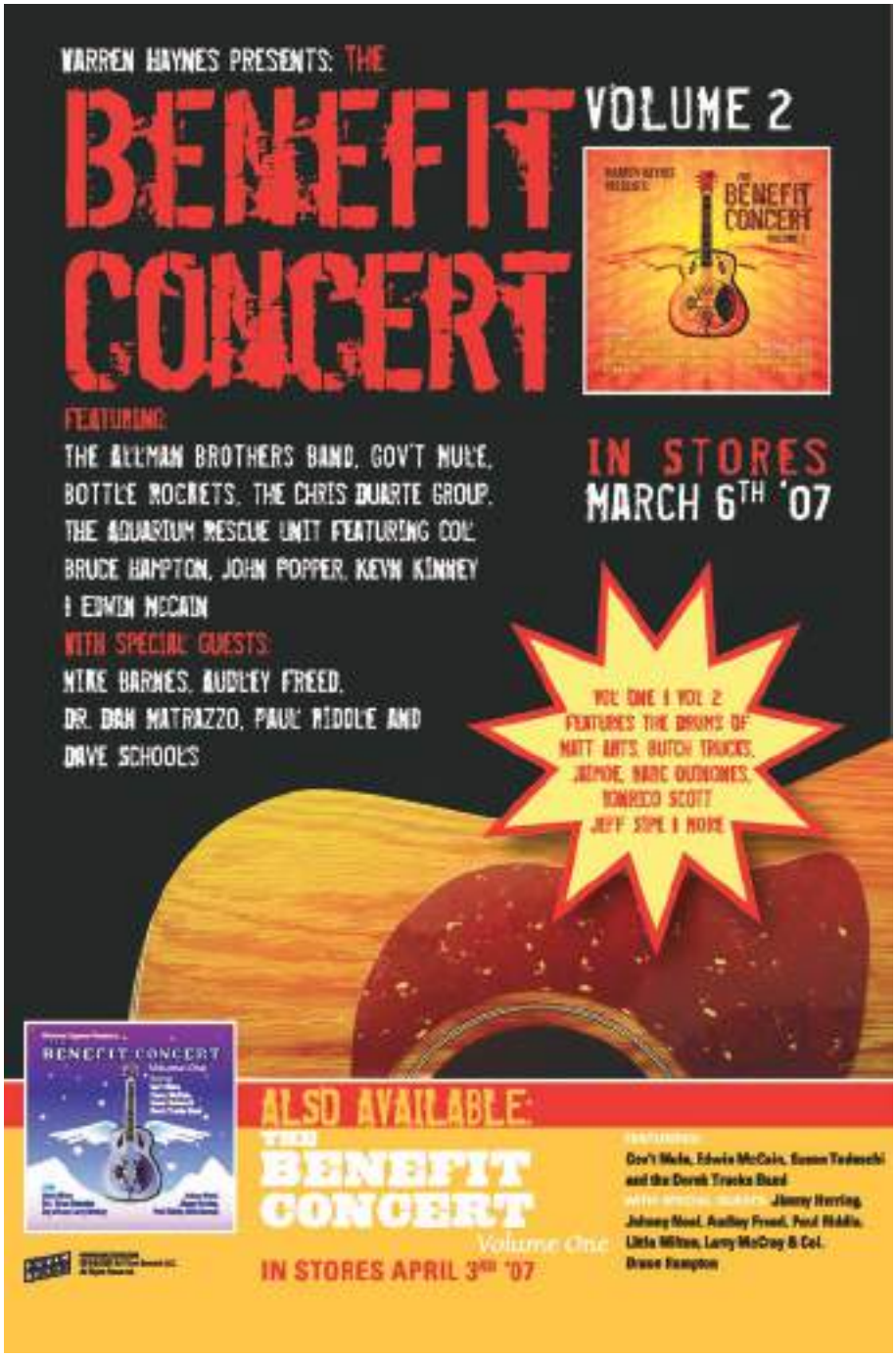
Jason: The toms that stuck way out?

Nicko: Yeah, they looked like North drums. When I joined the band, Pat said to me, " Oh, Nick, you need a big kit." And I said, " Why?" " Because I want you to have a big kit." I went, " Are you going to pay for it?" He went, " Yeah." I went, " Alright" So I went and got a Sonor catalog, because I loved Sonor drums and I still do today. I think at the time they were the best drums in the world.

I checked out the catalog and saw this twelve-piece drumkit with two bass drums and several single-headed toms. I liked it, but I only wanted to use one bass drum. So I bought the kit. It cost 600 quid—and that was in 1975. I used that kit with Pat, then I used it with Trust. And then when I joined Maiden, I jumped at an endorsement deal with Sonor, because I had been using their drums.

The key configuration of my kit is almost identical to that one from 1976. But I' ve changed the position of the drums because, as I get older, I sit lower, so I' ve pulled everything in a little bit more. I don' t have the back strength I used to, so I' ve had to sort of move the drumkit around my body.

The only thing that has really changed is the cymbal setup. I basically have five cymbals on the left, five on the right, and one in the middle. I used to have two Chinas behind me, which I would reach back and hit at the same time backhanded and all that crap, but not anymore. And, of course, I have a symphonic gong, which has always been behind me and



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So that' s where I' m at, kit-wise, and that' s where I' ll stay. Although I actually wanted to go to a five-piece kit for this tour, but the band talked me out of it.

Jason: Really?

Nicko: Yeah, because they said, " You' re the best-looking bloke in the band, and if you have a smaller kit all the girls will be looking at you!" [laughs]

Jason: Let' s talk about metal for a little bit. In this genre, as far as the profile that I' ve been building, I' m known for my double bass work. However, you reknown for only using one bass drum and having a very fast foot. In fact, you' re one of the few metal drummers who are single-bass, single-foot. That said, I think kids today are way too obsessed with speed. It' s a question I get all the time: " How do you play so fast?" So when kids ask me, I usually say, " Go back and listen to Clive Burr and Nicko McBrain. Play along to ' Somewhere In Time,' ' Aces High,' and ' Where Eagles Dare.' " Speaking of " Eagles," I tried to play that song many times when I was twelve years old, using one foot to play the triplets in the middle, and my foot would be falling off. What' s your advice for kids nowadays?

Nicko: Well, there are fundamentals to every drumming style, and it doesn' t matter what style of drumming you play. I know there are a lot more, but I use six basic rudiments when teaching someone to play—a single-stroke roll, a double-stroke roll, a flam, a triplet, a paradiddle, and a flamadiddle. You need to have those together to get a groove going.

With the bass drum, if you' ve got two bass drums, fine, work on both your left and right, but learn the basics and start off easy. The speed will come if you develop control. The thing is, once you' ve developed the basics and are proficient at them, you can then start getting quicker. But you have to master the basics.

My father once said to me, " Son, you have to adapt and be versatile. Don' t just play one kind of music. The drummer is normally called on to do all kinds of stuff—swing, Latin, jazz, brushes." So I used to practice with brushes.

Jason: I just started taking lessons with a jazz guy back home. There' s stuff I' m doing right now with brushes.

Nicko: The man to watch is Ed Thigpen. He' s unbelievable. And Vic Firth is pretty swift with a pair of brushes, too.

It seems to me that today kids just want to play fast. It' s like they' re trying to run before they can walk. Basically you' ve got to crawl before you can walk, so you' ve got to go through those basics.

I' m a firm believer in always saying to a right-playing, right-handed drummer, work on your left side. Even just working on a groove leading with your left side will be very helpful. And start drum fills all the way to the right of your kit and come back towards the left, leading with your left hand. As for playing left-hand lead, I don' t often do it myself, but I can.

Jason: You' ve been playing loud, aggressive music for thirty years. How do you feel, and do you have any injuries? I know you' ve got a problem with your knee. But are there any other things bothering you?

Nicko: After thirty years, nothing major, except tennis elbow in both elbows. They can get pretty sore.

Jason: I feel your pain, my friend, because I' ve got it in my right arm something horrible. Anything you can recommend to up-and-coming drummers to avoid these problems, aside from the simple answer of " don' t play" ?

Nicko: There' s nothing you can do. You can' t avoid that—it' s just like a sportsman when he plays aggressive sports—tennis, golf, or anything like that. When you do get it, anti-inflammatories before you go on stage and also once you' ve finished playing help. I also ice my

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photo by Andrew Lepley

elbows after the show. Once it starts to go numb, then you stop icing it. You don' t want to go beyond that point because you can damage yourself.

Jason: My next question is about bass drum speed. How tight is the spring on your bass drum pedal, and how tight is the bass drum head?

Nicko: I use the original DW 5000 Accelerator pedals. I tighten the spring up to the top. I also change the angle of the pedal board so it' s at a 45° angle when it' s at rest.

As for the head tension on the batter side of the drum, it' s really quite slack. I also don' t put dampening in the bass drum. The only thing I have is a small pillow for the microphone to sit on, because I use one mic inside the drum and one outside. As for the front head, it' s loose as well, just above a wrinkle.

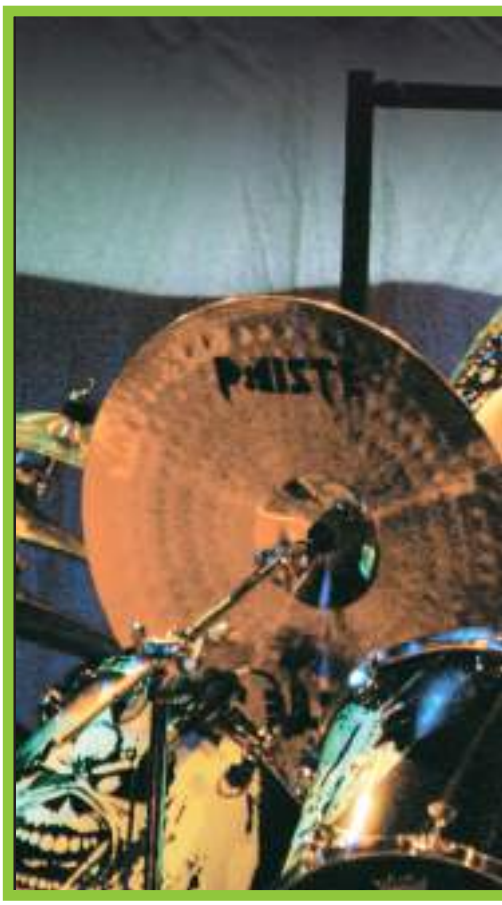
Jason: Earlier in the interview you talked about Sonor drums. Do you want to talk about your current Premier kit?

Nicko: I' ve been using the Premier Series drums for the last three tours. I' m using the maple shells for the toms and the maple/birch mix for the bass drum, which is from their Gen-X series. The drums are fantastic. And Premier has a new hardware series, the 6000, that works really well. I haven' t had one problem with them on the whole tour. I' ve also received many compliments on my drum sound—the bass drum specifically.

Jason: Are there any new bands or drummers that you' re into?

Nicko: Yeah, there' s a nice new band I know

"It seems to me that today kids just want to play fast. It's like they're trying to run before they can walk. You've got to *crawl* before you can walk."



called Shadows Fall. The drummer is not as good-looking as me, but he' s pretty hot. [laughs] Definitely you, mate, you' re one at the top of my list. I' m not just saying that because I' m doing the interview with you.

Jason: Thank you, I appreciate that. You don' t know how much that means to me. What qualities about your drumming and your personality would you like to be remembered for?

Nicko: Qualities for my drumming—well, that' s a bloody stiff question, isn' t it? How can I answer that without sounding egotistic or self-centered?

Jason: I know. Do you want me to answer it for you?

Nicko: No. [laughs] Well, speaking of my drumming, I' d like to be remembered for giving 100%, 100% of the time. I' d also like to be remembered as a passionate player.

I suppose people will say, "Oh, he' s got the fastest right foot in the business." Well, I haven' t, but it' s a nice accolade to have, and if it inspires people to try things out that they wouldn' t normally do, that' s great.

I think most of all, though, I' d like to be remembered as someone who has a smile on his face and who encourages people.

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Clarence Alonzo Oliver

An R&B Legend Finds New Inspiration

Clarence Oliver has played with four Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame artists during his long career in music: The Dells, Solomon Burk, Hank Ballard, and Etta James. But his impressive résumé doesn't stop there. The drummer also toured with R&B band The Moments (a.k.a. Ray, Goodman & Brown) sharing stages with legendary acts like James Brown, Whitney Houston, and Aretha Franklin. And he spent time as the house drummer for Joe and Sylvia Robinson's famed label All Platinum Records, which later became Sugar Hill Records.

In 1987, Clarence went on tour with his band The Rimshots (aka People Of Pleasure) in support of smooth jazz artist Najee. People Of Pleasure released several singles, including 1990's dance-funk song "Emergency" and 1994's "Never Say Never." Clarence toured all over the world with this group for seventeen years.

Today, Clarence and The Rimshots are busy in the Pocono Mountains resort area recording at Long Pond Studios under the production of Peter Carver. They also perform in the area with the Lady "A" & Destiny show band. Their recent CD, *Inspirational,* includes tracks by industry vets Peter Udell and Jack Keller.

Hometown: Petersburg, VA
Tools: Roland V-Drums, Sonor snare, Sabian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, Pearl pedals
More info: drumsticks07@yahoo.com

Brian Lutz

From Fort To Fort

South Florida–based drummer Brian Lutz has performed and taught in a variety of settings throughout his twenty-four-year drumming career. Notably, Brian served as the drumset player for the US Army's premier touring show band, The United States Army Field Band, between 1996 and 2000. He's also featured on their full-length self-titled CD. With the Army band, Brian toured extensively throughout the US and abroad.

Recently Brian completed a three-hour instructional/performance DVD titled *Practical Drumming.* This DVD includes tips for the beginner to advanced player and is packed with live performances in several musical styles.

Brian currently works with Brazilian jazz/rock guitarist Phill Fest, son of piano great Manfredo Fest, and will be appearing on Phill's upcoming CD for Concord Records. The drummer is also a member of Florida-based trio The SHOP. This group plays in numerous venues in the South Florida area, like The Hard Rock Casino in Ft. Lauderdale.

In addition to performing, Brian teaches privately and at George's Music in West Palm Beach.

Hometown: Jupiter, Florida
Education: Bachelor of music from the University Of North Florida
Tools: Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute kit, Paiste cymbals, DW hardware, Remo heads, and Vic Firth sticks
Influences: Steve Smith, Neil Peart, Vinnie Colaiuta, Peter Erskine, Sonny Payne, Louie Bellson, Butch Miles, Dennis Mackrel, Lewis Nash, Portinho
More info: www.brianlutz.com

Anthony Liberto

Drumming Down The Shore

"Led Zeppelin is what got me interested in playing drums," says New Jersey–based drummer Anthony Liberto. Since that first urge to pick up the sticks, Anthony has become a full-time working musician in various settings around the Jersey Shore.

Liberto started his professional career in the late '80s playing in R&B bands, which taught the young musician to be disciplined and not to overplay. Now the drummer divides his time between his cover band, Jayded, and several top-40, dance, classic rock, and oldies groups. His experience working with click tracks, sequencers, and digital drumkits also helped him land gigs with the comedy show *Tony N' Tina's Wedding,* the Royal Caribbean cruise line, and the Spirit Of Philadelphia dinner cruise.

Anthony is also a member of The Misteriosos, an original three-piece rock band in the style of The Doors, Led Zeppelin, and The Velvet Underground. For the past two years, the band has built a growing New York City fan base, and they've toured steadily up and down the East Coast. You can hear the band in steady rotation on Sirius satellite radio.

In addition to his various live projects, Anthony and his brother-in-law maintain a state-of-the-art recording studio called Tuned In Music And Media.

Hometown: Bellmawr, New Jersey
Tools: Fibes and Tama drums, a Pork Pie snare, Sabian and Zildjian cymbals, a Camco bass drum pedal, Remo heads, Los Cabos sticks, SKB and Levy cases
Influences: John Bonham, Alan White, Doane Perry
More info: www.anthonyliberto.com

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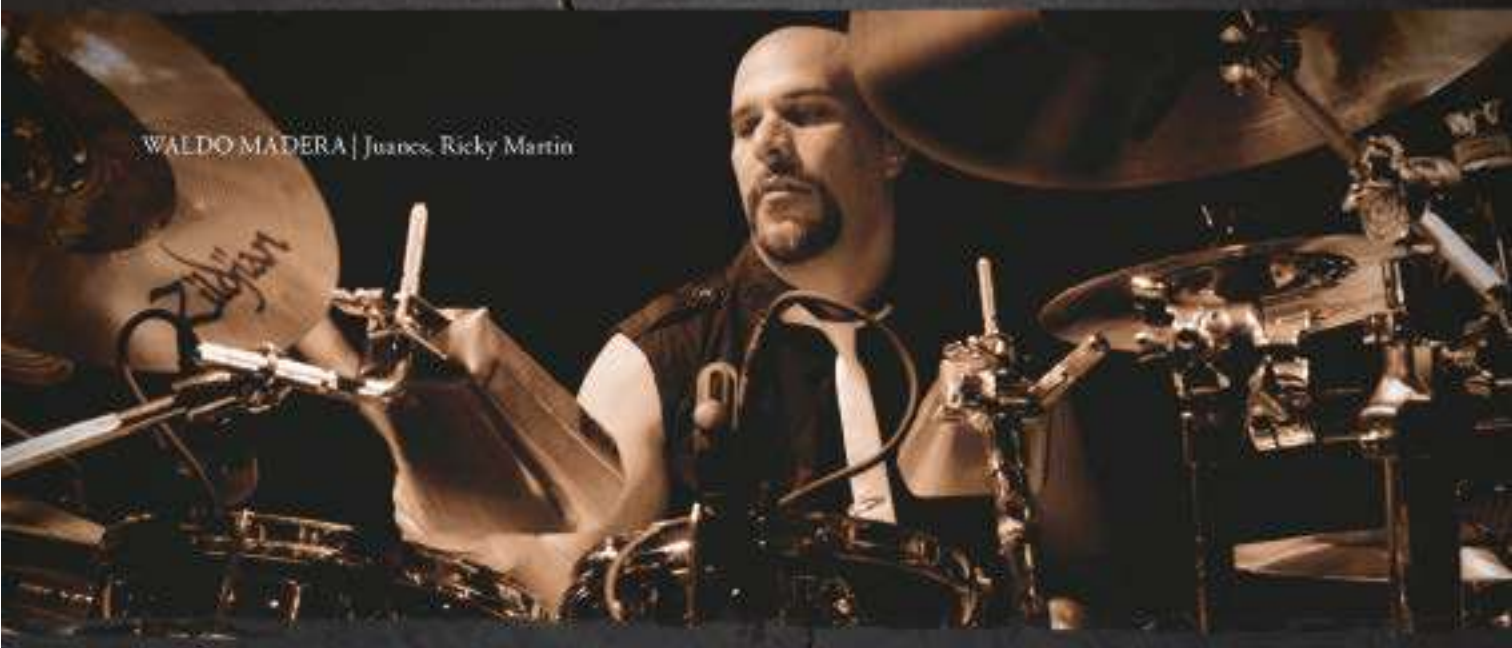

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★★ Fair
★ Poor

BILLY MARTIN
ILLY B EATS BOX SET, VOLUMES 1-3

★★★★½

Medeski Martin & Wood drummer Billy Martin recently re-packaged all three volumes of his funky breakbeat series into a well-designed box set. Although its primary purpose is to be used to build hip-hop tracks, this collection is also a *great* tool for play-along practice. Volumes 1 and 3 are the most produced of the set, featuring up-close recordings of the drummer's signature slippery groove, while Volume 2 is made up of improvised solo beats and percussion duets recorded direct to 2-track during MMW soundchecks or at the drummer's home studio. In addition to updated liner notes, each copy of this set also comes with Billy's personal autograph. (Amulet Records) **Michael Dawson**

DAVE HOLLAND QUINTET CRITICAL MASS

★★★½

The Dave Holland Quintet's instrumentation of sax, trombone, vibes, bass, and drums creates a somewhat transparent musical palette. With pieces ranging from moody to those drawing on a Latin feel, new drummer **NATE SMITH**'s buoyant, percolating performance fits in nicely. Check out the dynamic accent setups backing the solos on "The Eyes Have It"; whether they're cymbal rhythms, tom accents, or rapid single strokes, Smith's drumming is both supportive and exciting. Yet he also knows when to play less, creating a quiet base to build upon. In all, a fine debut recording with a seasoned band. (Dare2) **Martin Patmos**

THE BLACK CROWES FREAK 'N' ROLL...INTO THE FOG

★★★

The Black Crowes should have been around in the '70s. With their latest opus, recorded live at The Fillmore in San Francisco, the band strikes the right hippy chord more times than not. Vocalist **Chris Robinson** does his thing, singing with much soul, while brother **Rich Robinson** riffs on "Sting Me" and "My Morning Song." While the hits seem to have less drum appeal, cuts like "(Only) Halfway To Everywhere" and "Let Me Share The Ride" give **STEVE GORMAN** ample room to breathe. The Black Crowes throw a live party, and you don't want to miss it. (Eagle) **Steve Losey**

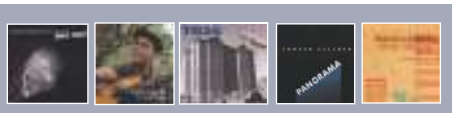
TAKING THE REINS

DJ FONTANA HANK-A-BILLY

It took half a century for this architect of rock drumming to release his own album, but here it is. Best known as Elvis's original drummer of fourteen years, here **DJ FONTANA** leads a quartet of seasoned vets, lending a rockabilly beat to Hank Williams favorites. It's a low-budget affair, but the needle hits (sorry, I mean laser) and—BOOM!—these boys are locked into a wide-pocketed bouncing groove from heaven. Of course, that's why DJ is who he is. From the genesis, DJ laid it down for love, not "rock stardom." This is the real deal. (www.djfontana.com) **Jeff Potter**

LOUIS HAYES AND THE CANNONBALL LEGACY BAND
MAXIMUM FIREPOWER

Hayes pays tribute to Cannonball Adderly, the legendary alto man he backed for six classic years. With trademark driving urgency, Hayes heats his quintet's hard-bopping heels. At the top of his solo, the fiery drummer plays only an extended unaccompanied cymbal ride. Despite the nakedness, the energy level doesn't dip an inch. (Savant) **Jeff Potter**



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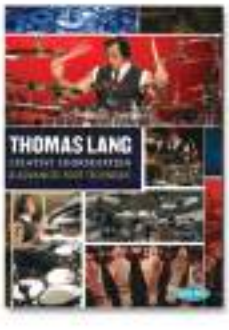

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ISIS IN THE ABSENCE OF TRUTH

★★★½

The indie-metal masterminds of shifting tempos, time signatures, and dynamics have returned with nine more tracks, this time on a bolder and more experimental scale than we've heard from them. With each song averaging roughly seven minutes in length, Isis's latest demands some serious listening time, but offers plenty in reward. The gorgeous 6/4 Danny Carey-esque groove of "Dulcinea" is deftly on-point, as are most of the tribal grooves offered by drummer **AARON HARRIS**. The album could stand some snare variance (the same cracking tone appears on just about every track), but the consistency of Harris's performance and the assembly of intricate parts are hard to beat. (Ipecac) **Waleed Rashidi**

VICTOR KRAUSS II

★★★½

Bassist Krauss and talented friends blend improvisational elements with folk and rock to create a trance-like "roots jazz" on VK's sophomore effort. Produced by Lee Townsend (Charlie Hunter, Bill Frisell), the music pays typically detailed attention to the guitars, but also to **MATT CHAMBERLAIN**'s drums. Chamberlain crafts a wonderful array of low-end downtempo grooves using drumkit and subtle electronics. Check out the four different snare sounds he employs in the first two minutes of "Hop," and the switch to a dub/hop snare at the end of "Dudeman." And notice how strong Matt's groove is, even when he starts playing off the beat. (Back Porch) **Robin Tolleson**

WALLS OF JERICHO WITH DEVILS AMONGST US ALL

★★★★½

Robust, resilient, and always ready to rumble—that's Walls Of Jericho's latest in a nutshell. Prize-fighting drummer **DUSTIN SCHOENHOFER** puts his dukes up alongside the guttural female vocals and palm-muted guitar assault with superior stickwork—and some real style to boot. Schoenhofer's feet really take flight on "I Know Hollywood And You Ain't It," which slams into a serious, steady groove. Even on the legato, half-timed rhythms of "The Haunted" or the easy-paced "No Saving Me," Schoenhofer simply delivers. This is a stellar metallic hardcore album that, even after repeated plays, never ceases to impress. (Trustkill) **Waleed Rashidi**

JUNK BOX FRAGMENT

★★★★½

Junk Box is an experimental jazz trio made up of **Natsuki Tamura** (trumpet), **Satoko Fujii** (piano), and **JOHN HOLLENBECK** (drums/percussion). The freeform music made with this unusual instrumental combination ranges from colorfully sensitive to nervously edgy, simultaneously exclamatory and searching. From Tamura's extended trumpet techniques to Fujii's vibrantly scattered runs, the music is fresh and well performed. Hollenbeck's playing is especially noteworthy, as he provides color, shape, and momentum throughout these improvisations. Indeed, with his execution on tracks like "Ants Are Crossing The Highway," *Fragment* contains some of Hollenbeck's best playing in a free context, making this Japanese import worth seeking out. (Libra) **Martin Patmos**

MY LATEST OBSESSION
DRUMMERS ON...

CALIFONE'S **JOE ADAMIK** AND **BEN MASSERELLA** ON **FRANK SINATRA** AND **ERIC DOLPHY**

JOE ADAMIK: *Nice And Easy,* the classic album by Frank Sinatra, was oddly enough one of the first records that came to mind for Ben and me. It could hardly be called a drum album, but that explains our mutual concept towards music: The song comes first and the drumming comes second. Frank is at his best on this album, and it may sound cliché, but no one could put a song over better than Frank Sinatra. Just listen to his version of "How Deep Is The Ocean." Everything you need to know about music is right there!

BEN MASSARELLA: *Conversations,* by Eric Dolphy, features no drums but plenty of interaction and conversation. Dolphy plays bass clarinet and his trademark sax in a variety of settings: solo, duet, trio, etc.... Listening to a musician who I admire perform such a variety of dialogs with himself and a few others, stretching out beyond what he knows best (both instrumentally and situationally) was very inspiring to me. Wondering what *I'd* play to fit in with these various groups loosened up the constraints and started opening up a whole new world of possibility to me.

Califone's latest album is *Roots & Crowns*.

AND FURTHERMORE...

CARBON LEAF LOVE, LOSS, HOPE, REPEAT
This sophomore entry from rock act Carbon Leaf finds drummer **SCOTT MILSTEAD** playing with his ears in addition to his hands. Milstead intently listens and makes plenty of appropriate insertions. The snappy, sparse groove of "Royal One" and the delicate ghost strokes of "Comfort" are shining examples of his subtle touch. (Vanguard) **Waleed Rashidi**

MEWITHOUTYOU BROTHER, SISTER
You can't call mewithoutyou a hardcore band anymore. Not when their new album features dreamscape ballads and contemplative acoustic snippets as powerful as their brain-rattling rockers. Drummer **RICKIE MAZZOTTA** is crucial to this progression, accenting singer **Aaron Weiss**'s barked mantras and spoken-word soliloquies with force. But he also makes his way around the kit with a subtler, more song-oriented touch. (Tooth & Nail) **Patrick Berkery**

LOREENA McKENNITT AN ANCIENT MUSE
Surfacing after personal tragedy and a nine-year recording hiatus, Celtic/world artist McKennitt returns with her most evocative disk to date. A dozen drummers and percussionists, including **MANU KATCHÉ**, **CLIVE DEAMER**, **RICK LAZAR**, **TAL BERGMAN**, Greek trio **KROTALA**, and McKennitt herself migrate through Asian and Mediterranean rhythmic terrain, exploring trance-inducing stomps and interlocking grooves. Check out the rousing "Kecharitomene" and transcendental "Beneath A Phrygian Sky" and "Caravanserai." (Quinlan Road/Verve) **Will Romano**

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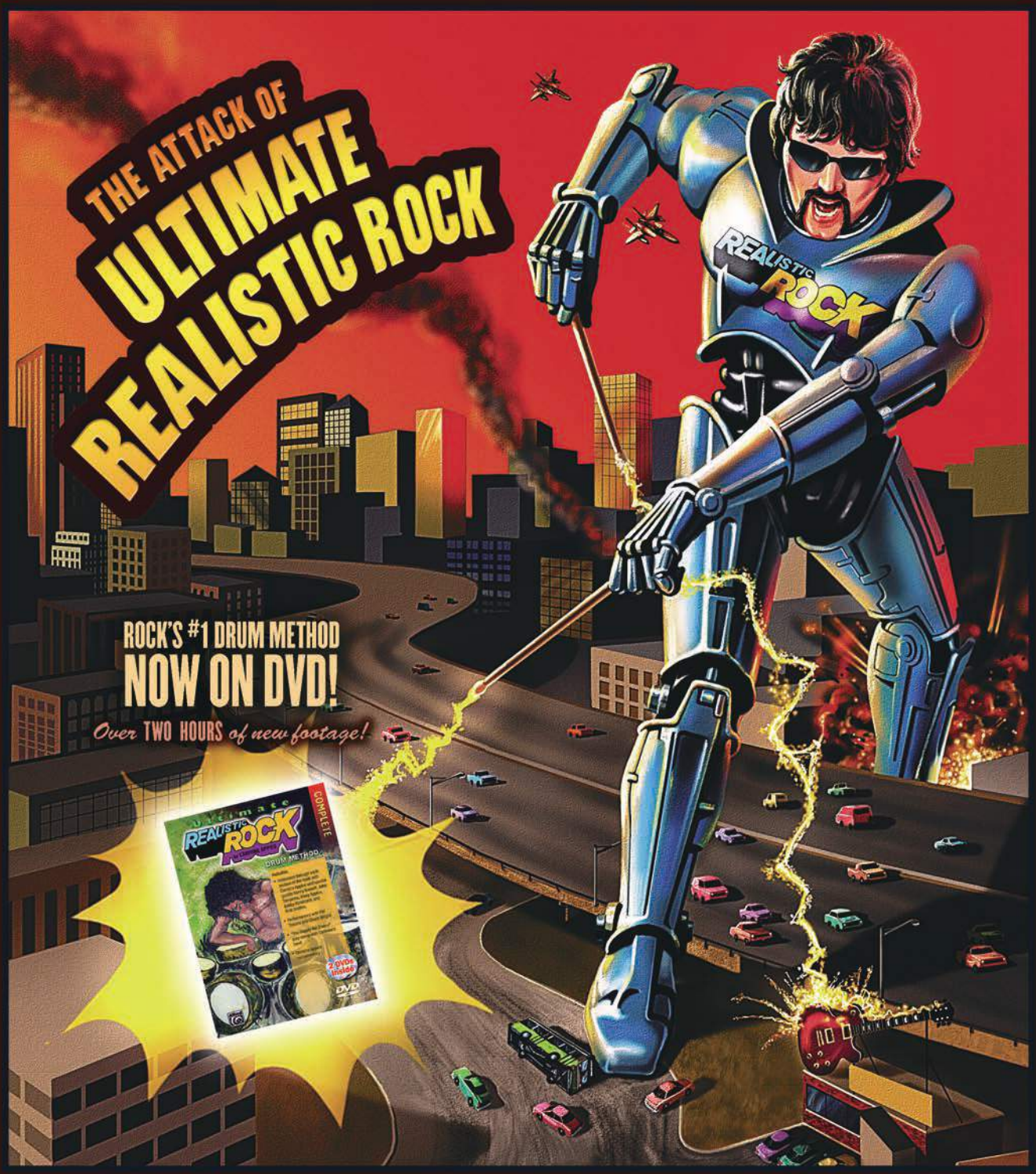

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DRUM METHOD FOR BAND & ORCHESTRA, BOOKS 1 AND 2
BY HASKELL W. HARR

BOOK LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE $9.95

★★★★★

Sometimes what's old is new. Haskell W. Harr's *Drum Method For Band & Orchestra,* originally published in the 1930s, offers a wealth of instruction that is as impressive today as it was way back then. Book 1 starts off with the basic components of a snare drum, rudiments, music notation, and the correct way to hold the sticks. The only oddity may be that Harr does not address "matched grip" of the drumsticks. (Let's remember, this was written in 1937.) All of the fifty-three lessons progress easily and incorporate sticking as well as some instructional notes on each new idea. Book 2 focuses on the twenty-six drum rudiments. From the long roll to the double ratamacue, each is easy to read and includes sticking as well as informative explanations. Some other niceties are the addition of accents and tempo markings. No doubt about it, these books have stood the test of time! (Hal Leonard) **Fran Azzarto**

STYX ONE WITH EVERYTHING

DVD LEVEL: ALL $14.99

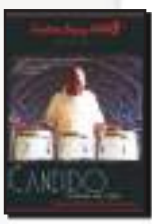
★★★★½

This emotional, inspiring, and refreshing live performance from rock icons Styx, playing their hits with the enthusiastic Contemporary Youth Orchestra of Cleveland, should inspire young musicians and enlighten band directors and music industry execs to the importance of such collaborations to the preservation of the music industry. The smooth yet technically charged drumming of **TODD SUCHERMAN**, who performs inside a Plexiglas frame, fuels the 115-piece orchestra with high-octane drive. Cool bonus features include a Quake Cam close-up of Sucherman, as Styx perform a lengthy medley of tunes from their deep catalog, which was constructed by Sucherman for their live shows. (Eagle Vision) **Mike Haid**

CANDIDO HANDS OF FIRE

DVD LEVEL: ALL $19.95

★★★½☆



A portrait of the great *conguero* at a vigorous eighty-two, *Hands Of Fire* asserts Candido's historic role in wedding Latin elements with jazz. The sixty-eight-minute documentary features interviews with the artist reminiscing on his career, along with commentary by peers. Missing are clips from Candido's heyday with jazz giants. But the recent performance clips well demonstrate the master's signature three-conga "melodic" style. Ultimately, *Hands* captures the big-hearted nature that Candido channels through his drums. (www.musicvideodistributors.com) **Jeff Potter**

CREAM CLASSIC ARTISTS

DVD/CD LEVEL: ALL $19.99

★★★★½

It was 1966 to 1969, and then it was over. Cream came and went, but their music endured. *Cream: Classic Artists* is a two-disc set that features two hours of video footage on DVD and five songs on CD. Chronicled here is everything you want to know. From the band's un-revealed breakup to their live performances, questions are answered and insights given about rock's most famous trio. What's really fun is hearing recollections from the band, like drummer **GINGER BAKER**'s first impressions of bassist **Jack Bruce**. One odd theme weaved throughout the DVD is that Baker still seems really pissed off about various aspects of the band. On the five-song audio disc, it was refreshing *not* to hear "White Room" and "Sunshine Of Your Love" yet again. Instead, the Skip James composition "I'm So Glad" and the James Bracken instrumental "Steppin Out" are able to shine. Musically, cuts like "N.S.U." are exactly what you'd expect. Here, Baker and Bruce play the hell out of their instruments, while guitarist **Eric Clapton** riffs on. And one of the best glimpses of Ginger comes courtesy of the spastic solo in the middle of "Toad." (Image Entertainment) **Steve Losey**

CUT TIME
MORE DRUMS ON DVD

MARCO MINNEMANN THE MARCO SHOW
Always making the impossible seem effortless, Minnemann convincingly swings a big band, drives an insane fusion trio, and explains and performs along with tracks of his original music on this entertaining, well-produced DVD. Three extreme solos and cool bonus features help make this a Minnemann classic. (DW DVD) **Mike Haid**

EXPLORING THE DRUM:
LEARN TO PLAY DJEMBE AND DUMBEK BY KEN SHORLEY
"Especially for beginners" is the key to this instructional DVD. Rhythms are demonstrated by marking finger and hand positions and reciting syllables for each beat. Even the "bonus grooves" are clearly stated and built from the ground up. I look forward to Volume 2 and a bit more of a challenge. (irhythm.com) **David Licht**

THE STEVE HUFFSTETER BIG BAND GATHERED AROUND
DAVE TULL is quietly building a reputation as one of the finest jazz drummers on the West Coast. This "live" big band DVD is expertly recorded, showcasing the drummer's impressive range, musical sensitivity, and at times fiery playing style. Very inspiring. (www.aixrecords.com) **Frederick Bay**

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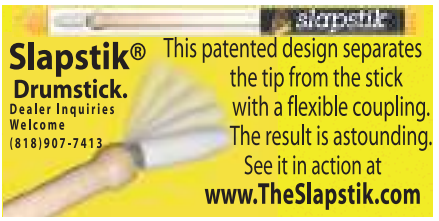
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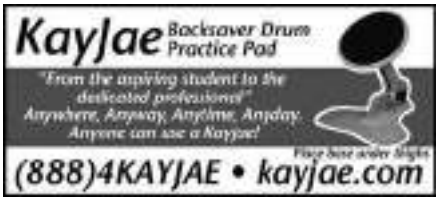
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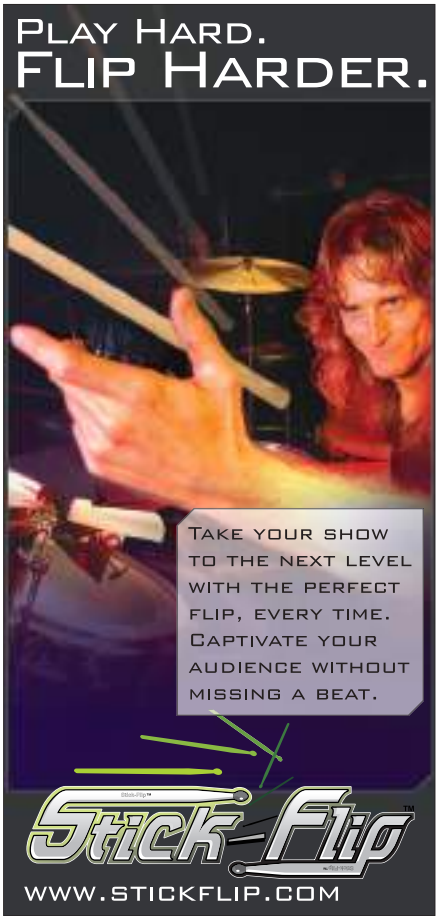
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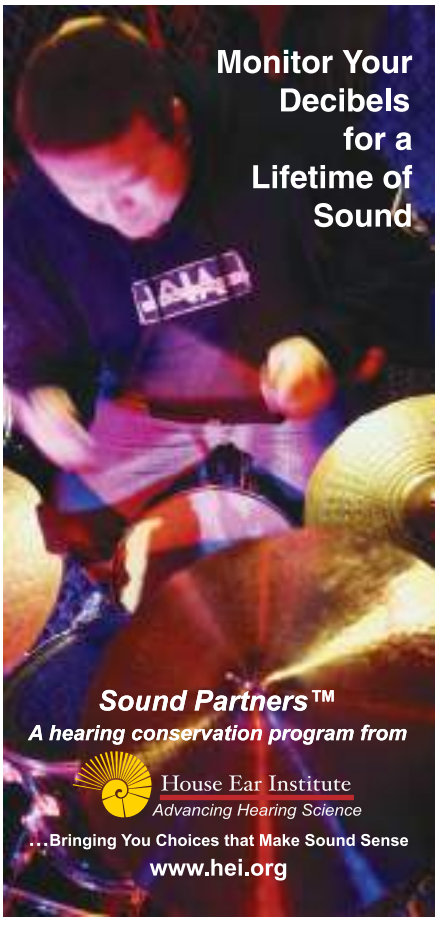
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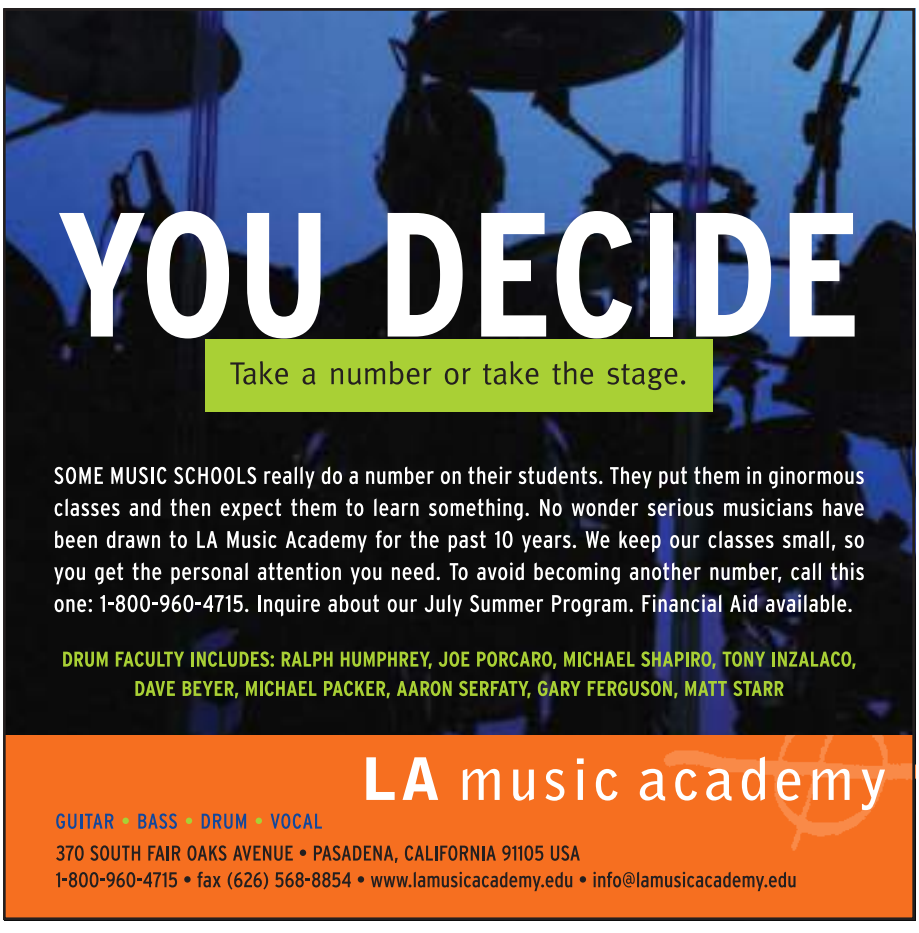
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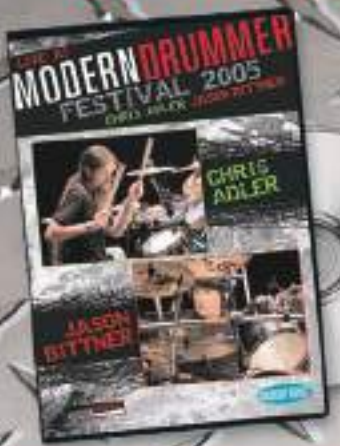

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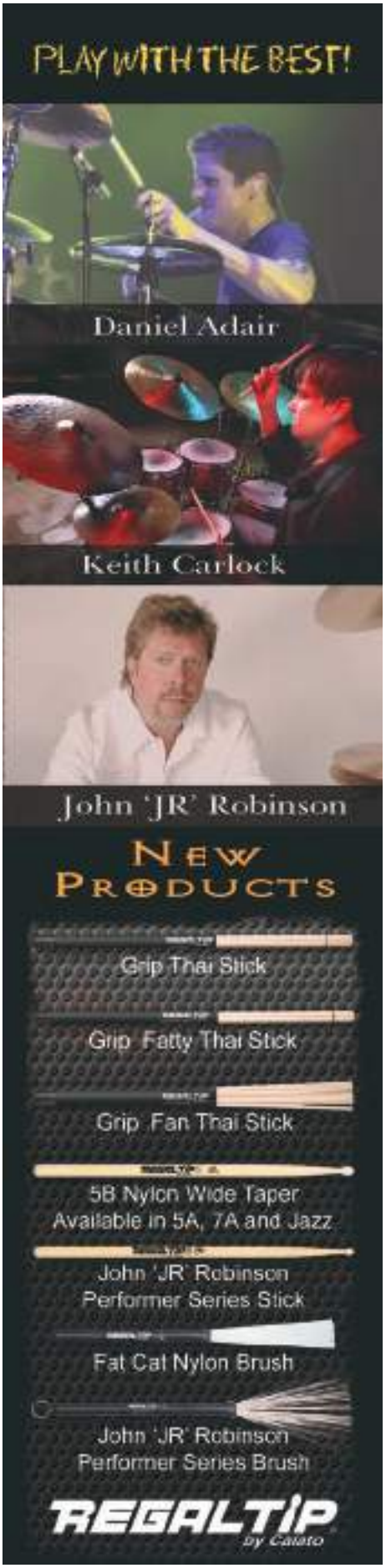


2007 NAMM Show Events

The National Association Of Music Merchants (NAMM) trade show was held this past January 18–21 in Anaheim, California. The show is almost as well known for its special events as it is for the products displayed on the show floor (which will be showcased in next month's issue). Here's a look at some of the 2007 show's special activities.

Remo 50th Anniversary Party

The Remo 50th Anniversary Gala was held on the evening of Wednesday, January 17. Doors opened to the sounds of The **Jeff Hamilton** Trio. The 700 guests included individuals and heads of companies that contributed to Remo's achievements throughout the company's fifty years.

Midway through the evening, Remo Inc. president **Brock Kaericher** welcomed distinguished guests, many of whom presented gifts and/or awards to **Remo Belli**. These included **Joe Lamond** (NAMM president), **Tak Isomi** (president, Pearl USA), **W.H. Hsieh** (chairman, KHS Group), **Yoshi Doi** (president, Yamaha Corp. Of America), **Don Lombardi** (chairman, Drum Workshop), **Debbie Zildjian** (CEO) and **John DeChristopher** (VP, artist relations & event marketing worldwide) of Zildjian, **Joe Calato** (chairman, Regal Tip), and **Robert Zildjian** (chairman, Sabian).

After the awards ceremony, a video montage memorialized Remo's history with images from 1957 to the present. Remo Belli then thanked everyone for the recognition and praise. The party continued with Latin jazz from **Poncho Sanchez** and his band, with **Jimmie Morales** on congas. Special guests **Pete**, **Sheila**, and **Juan Escovedo** sat in and got the party hopping.

Poncho Sanchez (in hat) and his band, along with Jimmie Morales, entertained the guests during the second half of the party. Juan (left), Pete (center), and Sheila Escovedo sat in for a few tunes as everyone hit the dance floor.

The Jeff Hamilton Trio provided the entertainment at the start of the evening.

From left: Remo president Brock Kaericher, NAMM president Joe Lamond, and Remo Belli, founder & CEO of Remo, Inc. Lamond presented Belli with the NAMM Milestone award, recognizing Remo's years of excellent service in the music products industry.

Sabian Live

Sabian's annual after-NAMM event was held on Friday, January 19. Hosted by **Dom Famularo**, the show opened with **Daniel de Los Reyes**'s exciting act called Drum Jungle, featuring de los Reyes, **Luisito Quintero**, **Roberto Quintero**, and **Walter Rodriguez** on percussion, as well as **Joey Heredia** on drumset. The act played forty minutes of intense Brazilian music, with carnival dancers and vocalists, solo spots by each of the percussionists, and a rhythmic vibe that kicked the evening into high gear.

Next up, **Tom Brechtlein** was joined by Steve Weingart (keys), Frank Gambale (guitar), and Carlitos Del Puerto (bass) for a set of electric jazz. Brechtlein anchored the complex compositions with an unshakable groove, but got burning when the moment was right.

Sammy J Watson and his band The Apex Theory provided the rock element of the evening. The trio impressed the audience with a set of powerful metal music.

Steve Ferrone's band closed the show on a dance/funk groove. The set included Average White Band and James Brown classics. Surprise guest bassist/vocalist Will Lee joined in on "Pick Up The Pieces," helping to end the evening on a seriously funky note. Additional support for the event was provided by Audix, DW, Gibraltar, Gon Bops, Gretsch, LP, Regal Tip, Pro-Mark, and Remo.

Daniel de los Reyes

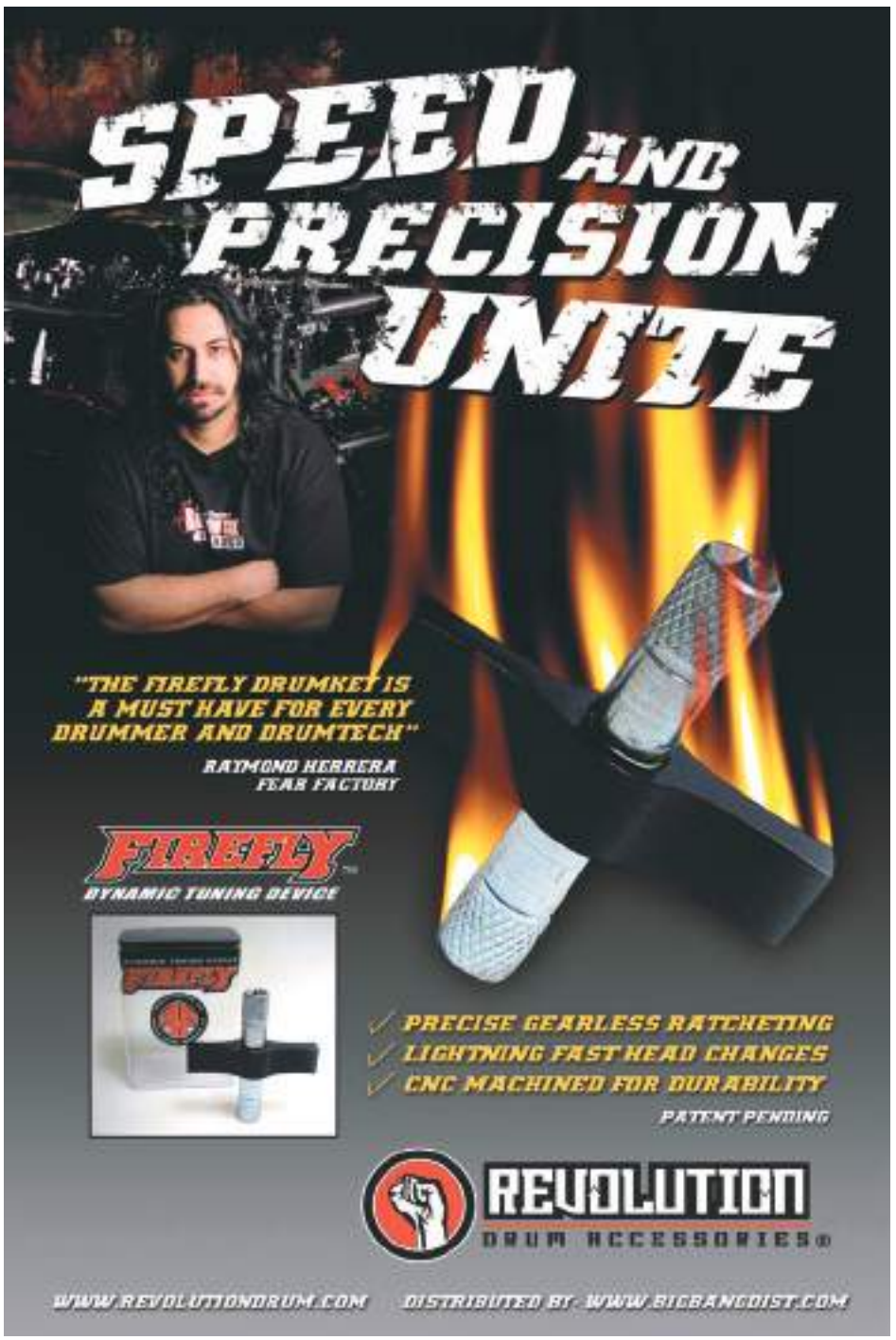
Luisito Quintero

Joey Heredia

Tom Brechtlein

Sammy J Watson

Steve Ferrone



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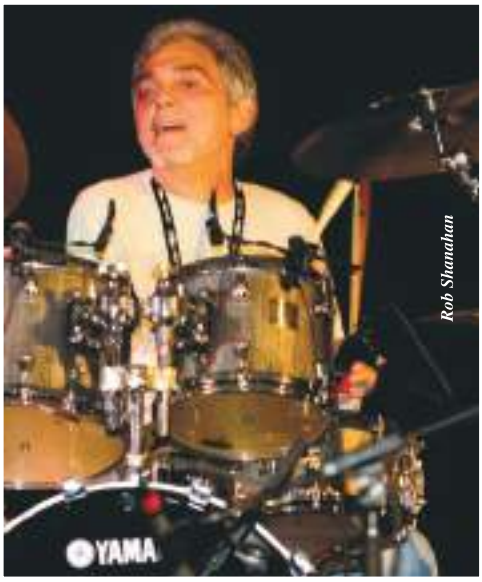
Zildjian Party

Zildjian hosted a party on Saturday, January 20 to thank their dealers for an excellent sales year and to thank their artists for being part of the Zildjian family. Entertainment was provided by drumming session great **Rick Marotta** and crack R&B band The Bristols. Along with Marotta and the band, a bevy of guest drummers sat in to perform a variety of groove classics. The roster of guest players included **Steve Gadd**, **Jerry Marotta**, **Russ Miller**, **Oscar Seaton**, **Luis Conte**, **Teddy Campbell**, **Denny Seiwell**, **Thomas Pridgen**, **Marvin McQuitty**, **Clayton Cameron**, and newly signed Zildjian artist **Sheila E.**



Clockwise from top: Steve Gadd, Sheila E, Luis Conte, Oscar Seaton, Clayton Cameron, Denny Seiwell, Rick Marotta

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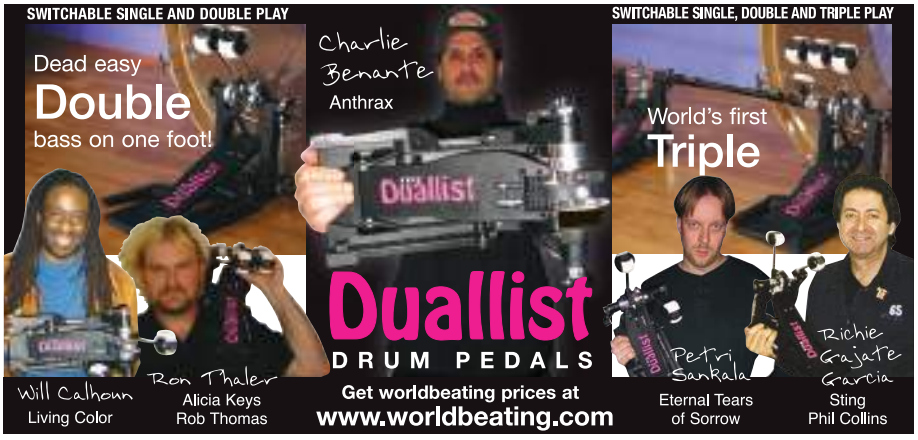

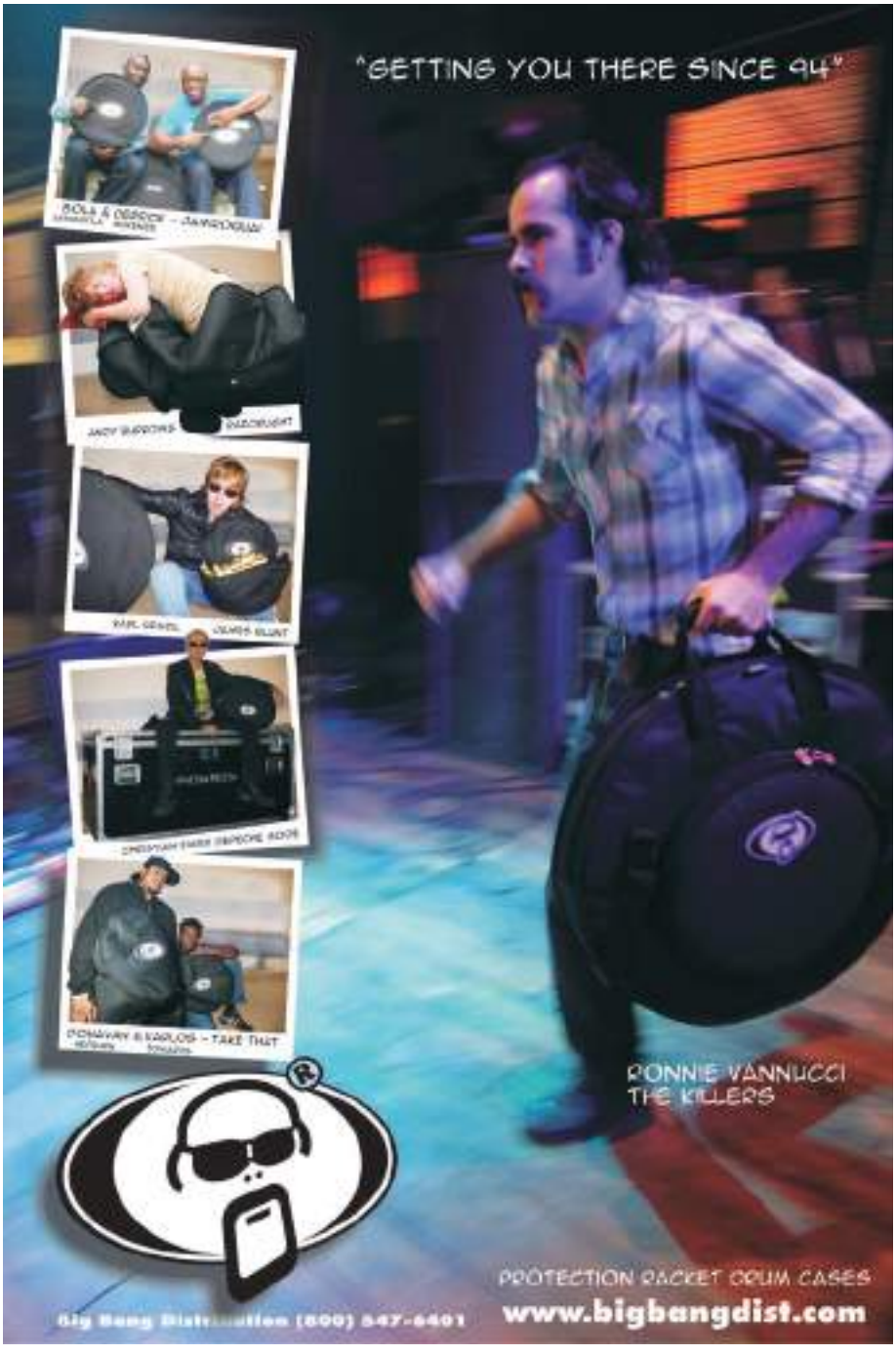

BACKBEATS

WFD Winter 2007 Championships

The World's Fastest Drummer (WFD) Championships have been a feature at NAMM for the past five years. The Battle Of The Hands and Battle Of The Feet prelims were held January 18–20. WFD Champions **Mike Mangini**, **Tim Yeung**, and **Matt Smith** offered demonstrations and tips on building technique and preparing for WFD.

The finals of each category were held on Sunday, January 21. WFD musical director **Johnny Rabb** opened with a scorching set with Ten Finger Orchestra. Then spectators were treated to one of the most exciting WFD events to date as contestants set six new world records. The winner of the Battle Of The Hands was **Jeff Guthery** with 1,054 strokes per minute. Second place went to Italy's **Merlini Riccardo** (1,037), while third place went to **Ikaika Pekelo** (948). The Battle Of The Feet title went to Canada's **Mike Mallais** with 978 strokes. Second place was **Scott DeMartini** (900), and third place went to **Tyson Jupin** (850).

Fastest Hands winners, from left: Merlini Riccardo, Jeff Guthery, and Ikaika Pekelo

Fastest Feet Winners, from left: Tyson Jupin, Mike Mallais, and Scott DeMartini

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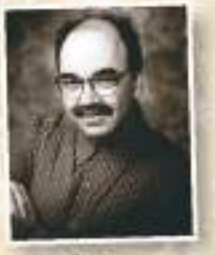
EXCLUSIVE ARTIST APPEARANCES


Erskine

Fagiano

Ford

Osborne

Moore

Rabb

	Saturday, May 19, 2007	Sunday, May 20, 2007
10:30 AM	Hannah Ford courtesy of Rebeats	Steve Fagiano courtesy of Rebeats, Vic Firth and Evans
12:30 PM	Danny Osborne courtesy of Drum Workshop, Zildjian, Pro-Mark, Roland and Rebeats	Johnny Rabb courtesy of Roland and Drum Workshop
2:30 PM	Stanton Moore courtesy of Steve Maxwell, Gretsch, Drum Workshop, Remo, Bosphorus, Vic Firth, LP, XL, Audix and Puresound	Peter Erskine courtesy of Drum Workshop, Hal Leonard, Zildjian, Roland, Evans, Shure, NotSoModern Drummer, Vic Firth, Alfred and Rebeats

notes: artist appearances are subject to availability and may change without notice

EXHIBITORS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

Tom Aung
Bosphorous
Doug Carrington
Andy Cheisler
Classic Drummer
Craviotto Drum Co.
CymbalHolic (Bill Hartrick)
Drum Workshop
Hit Drum
Huber-Brown Music
JC's Drummin Music Center
Keith Larsen
Jim Kruta
Tony Lewis
Joe Lurenz
Ludwig Drum Company
Doc Lyon
Maryland Drum Company
Steve Maxwell
Modern Drummer
NotSoModernDrummer
Palmetto Music
Play Drums
Puresound Percussion
Randy Rainwater & Bum E
Carlos
Roland
Lee Ruff
Chuck Scalia
Skins N Tins Drum Shop
Bob Sharp
Lia Sophia Jewelry
ThunderEcho Drums
Trick Drums

Zildjian · EVANS · dw · Roland · Hal Leonard Corporation · REMO · Modern Drummer · pro-mark · LP

Bosphorus Cymbals · Vic Firth · puresound · Gretsch · SHURE · XL Specialty · Alfred · Not So Modern Drummer · AUDIX

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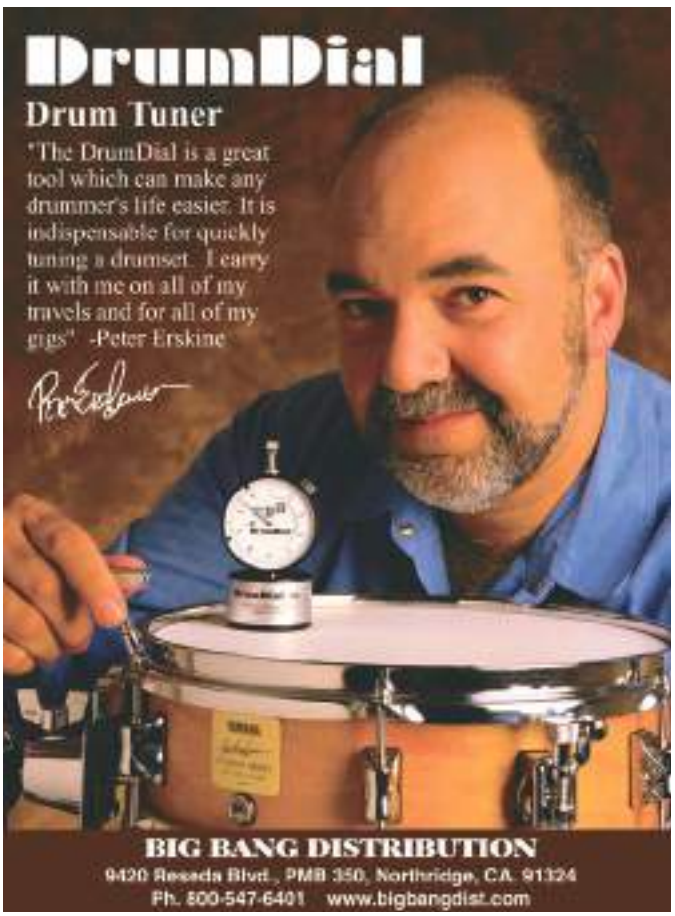
BACKBEATS

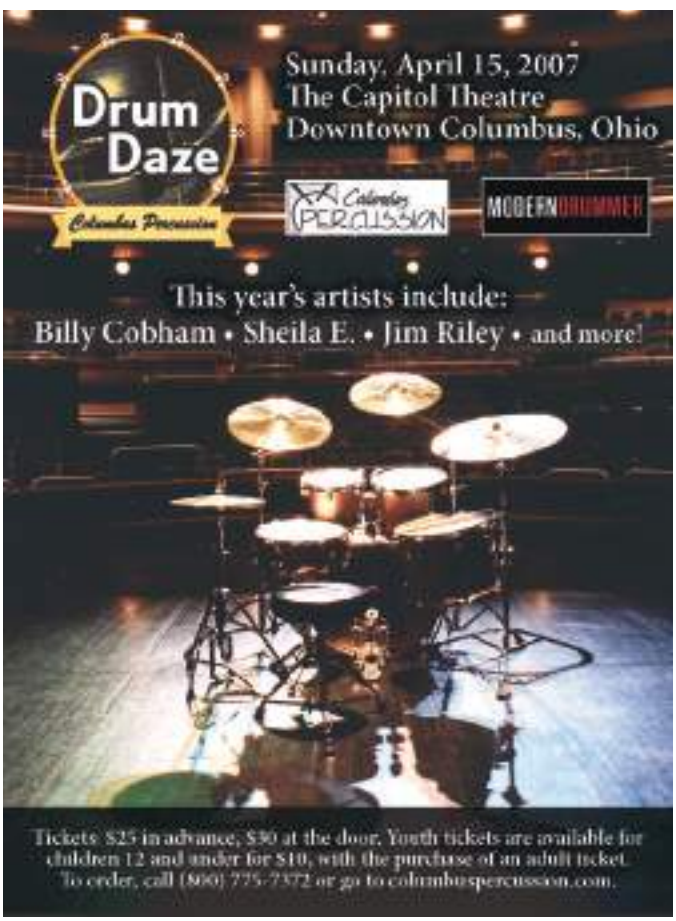
Fourteen-year-old **Caitlin Kalatus** became the youngest person to hold a WFD world record when she beat out a blistering 799 singles on the bass drum to win the Battle Of The Feet (female division). Mystery Hangup drummer (and Miss WFD) **Lux** won the Battle Of The Hands (female division) with 901 singles in 60 seconds.

Over $12,000 in prizes awarded to the winners included two Pearl drumsets, two sets of Meinl cymbals, fifty Remo heads, a year's supply of personalized Pro-Mark sticks, an Axis double pedal, two Drumometers, and educational gifts from Alfred Publishing. For more information about WFD events, visit www.worldsfastestdrummer.com.

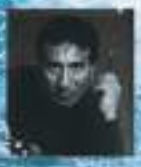
Fourteen-year-old Caitlin Kalatus won the Battle Of The Feet in the female division.

Mystery Hangup drummer (and Miss WFD) Lux won the female division for fastest hands.





VIRTUAL DRUMMER SCHOOL



Alex Acuña
on-line

Ignacio Berroa
on-line

Gregg Bissonette
on-line

Bill Bruford
on-line

Luis Conte
coming soon

Peter Erskine
on-line

Giovanni Hidalgo
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Thomas Lang
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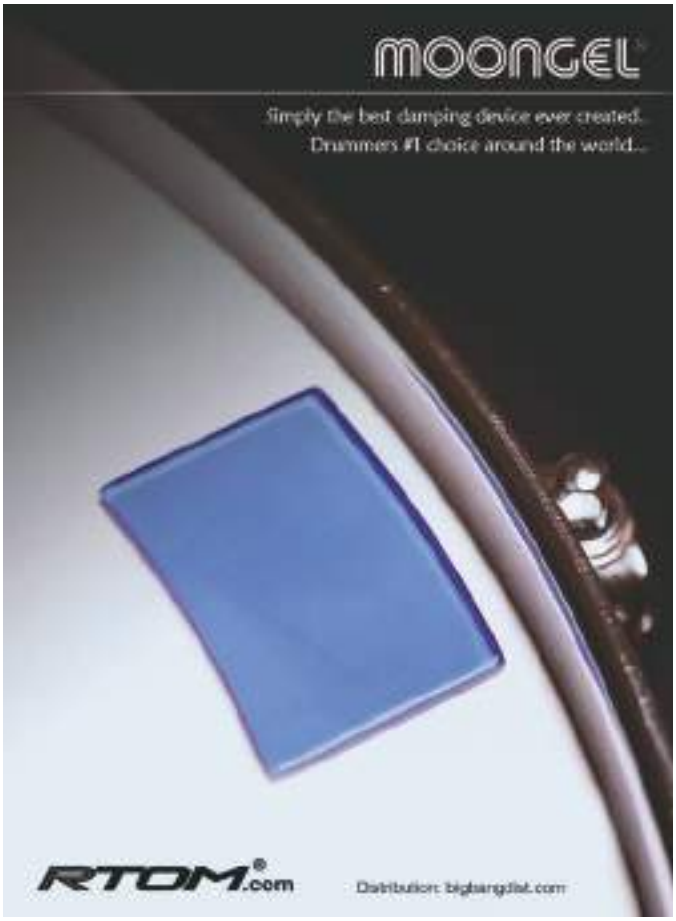
Zildjian Expands Factory

Craigie Zildjian, CEO, and Debbie Zildjian, V.P. Human Resources

Zildjian has broken ground on an $11 million plant expansion at their Norwell, Massachusetts headquarters facility. When finished, this expansion will add over 15,000 square feet of additional cymbal manufacturing space and increase production capacity by over 50%. The expansion project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2008.

Several key production processes are also being updated, including doubling the oven capacity for heating cymbal blanks. The rotary ovens utilized by Zildjian are so special that they require a long lead-time and an investment of over $1 million for this single operation. Another addition that is already completed is the installation of a Wenger sound booth for cymbal testing and selection. This booth allows the listener to adjust the sound characteristics of the booth to replicate various acoustic environments ranging from a practice room to an arena. Meanwhile, a new Drumset Artist Vault has been located closer to the famous Drummers Lounge where many Zildjian Cymbal Artists select their personal cymbal setups.

According to Zildjian CEO Craigie Zildjian, "While we've continuously improved all of our processes, at the end of the day, it's the highly skilled craftsmen at our Norwell facility that make Zildjian cymbals what they are. It takes generations to build up the quality and experience of the workforce that we currently have in place."



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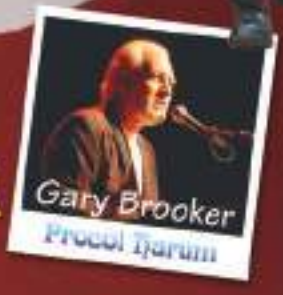

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Simon Kirke & Mick Ralphs (Bad Company) • Spike Edney (Queen)

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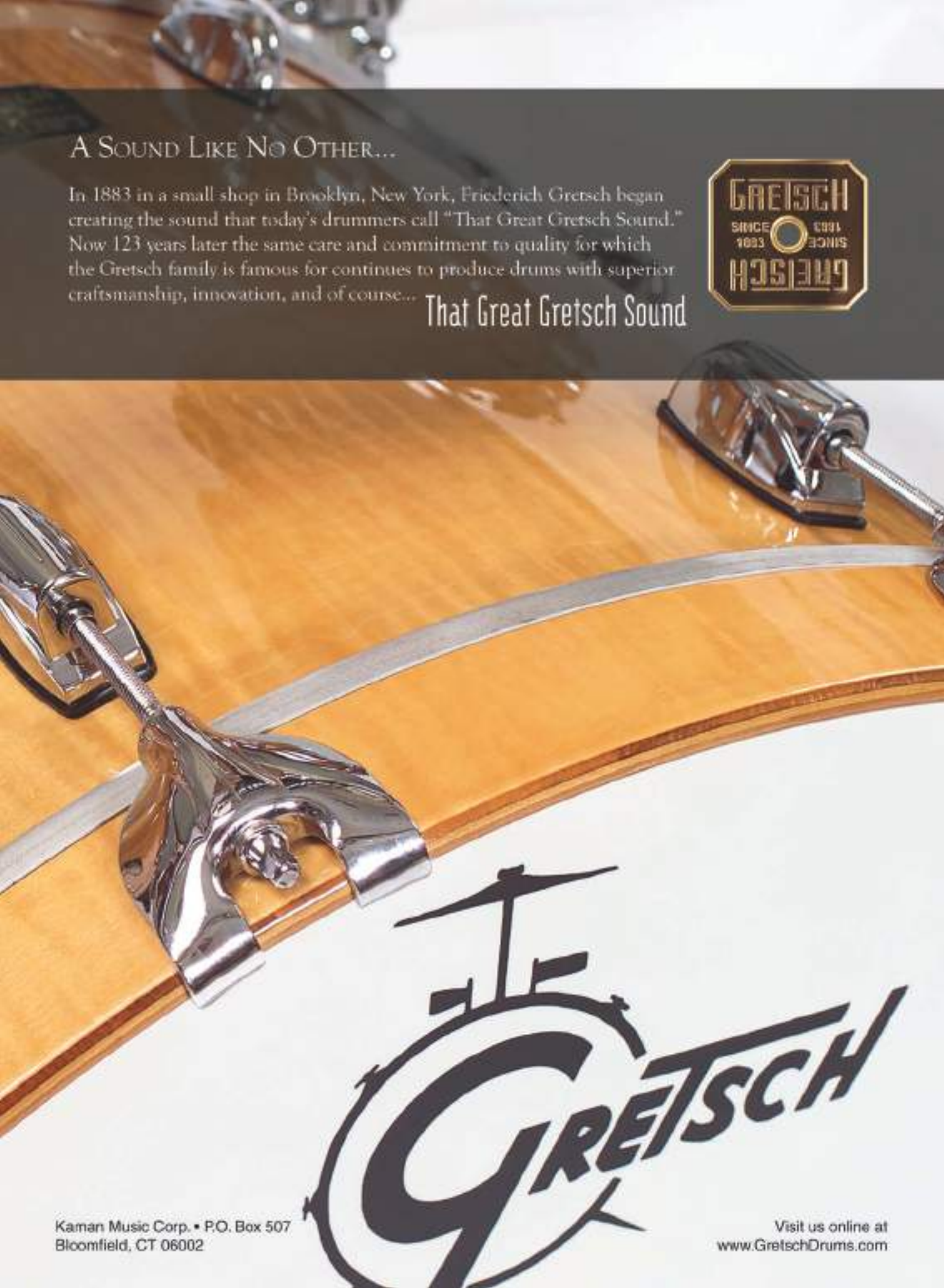
Clearly Different

Sam Coffman of Chicago put together this unique kit between 1996 and 2001 by special-ordering one drum at a time from the Fibes Drum Company. The acrylic shells all have unusual sizes: The toms measure $7^1/_2$x8, $8^1/_2$x10, $10^1/_2$x13, and $14^1/_2$x16, the bass drum measures $15^1/_2$x26, the clear snare is a $4^1/_2$x14, and the fiberglass snare with brushed copper wrap is a $6^1/_2$x14.

None of the tom shells have mounting brackets installed. Instead, the drums are mounted using original-design Tama Star-Cast mounts. The hoops on the toms and the tops of the snare drums are die-cast. The bottom hoops on the snares are a special Fibes design that accommodates the old-style SFT snare mechanism. Sam' s collection of Paiste cymbals includes large and particularly low-pitched New Signature and Dimensions crashes, bright-sounding splash and China cymbals, and an extra-heavy 24" Dimensions Mega Power Bell ride that has (according to Sam) " an enormous, railroad crossing–sounding bell."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.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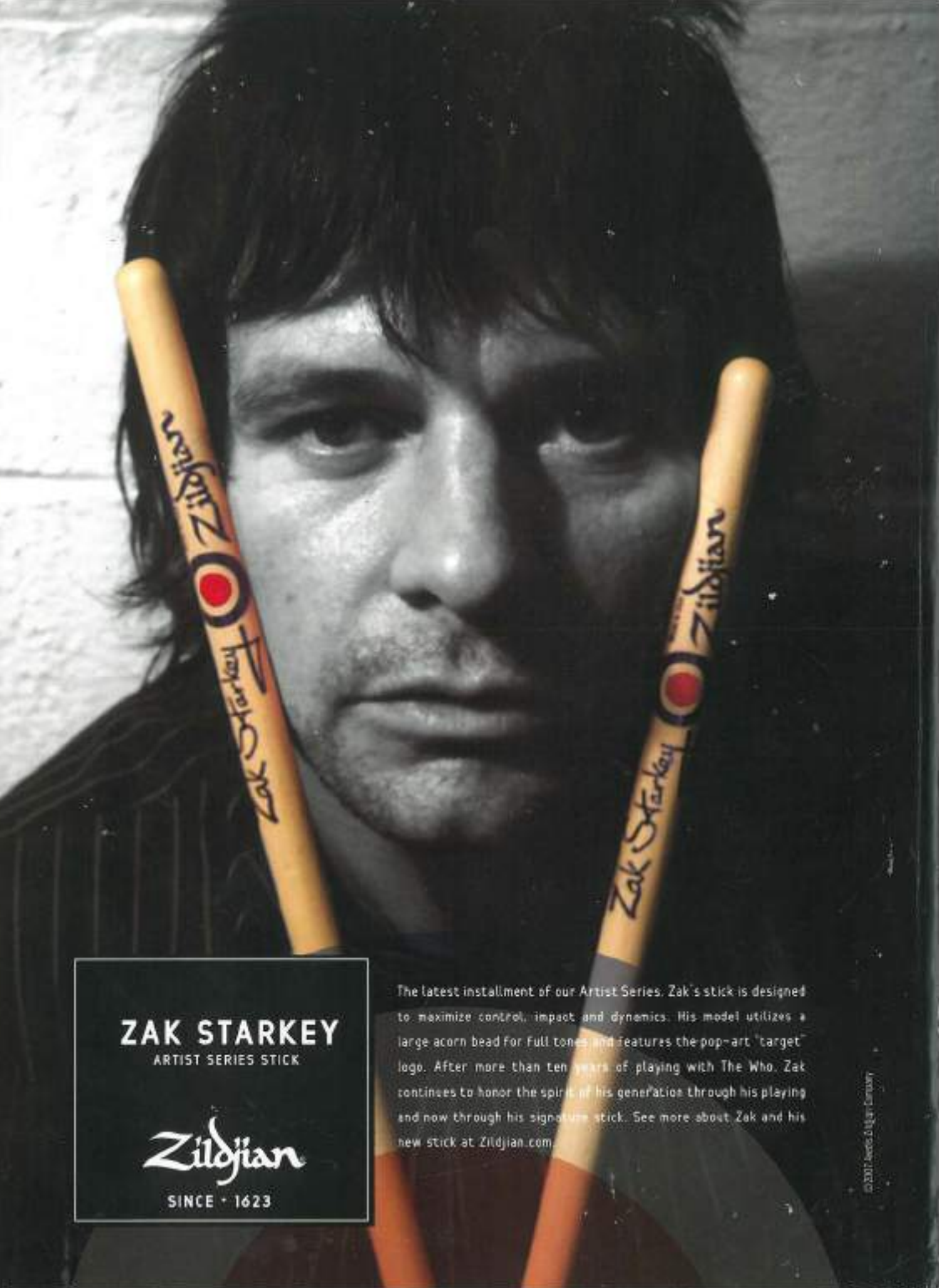

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